

# “we don’t really talk about them

Finnish art teachers’ beliefs, attitudes and views  
regarding Sámi culture in a postcolonial framework

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Liisa Hannula

*“We don’t really talk about them”*

Finnish art teachers’ beliefs, attitudes and views regarding  
Sámi culture in a postcolonial framework

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## Abstract

My master's thesis aims to problematise the situation where Finland is seen simultaneously as a country whose education system is praised internationally, but which still often neglects its indigenous people both on a social and educational level. Despite its status as a welfare state, Finland has repeatedly received criticism from the UN about violating the rights of the Sámi.

The Finnish education system has responded slowly to the challenges of an increasingly multicultural school. It emphasises cultural diversity, but at the same time ignores our indigenous people. Thus, the education system can be said to maintain a status where very little is known about the Sámi and the relationship between Finland and colonialism. The Sámi and their culture are often represented through the prism of images based on a stereotypical representation of the Sámi living in Lapland. However, the majority of Sami children live, in fact, outside the traditional Sámi areas.

My thesis seeks to find answers to how much Finnish art educators know about the Sámi and what kind of attitudes and feelings the topic raises. The material of my thesis has been acquired by means of a semi-structured theme interview and is interpreted within the framework of indigenous research and post-colonial theories. The interviews were conducted in Oulu and Helsinki with four Finnish art teachers. The interview material also appears in my thesis as a separate part, in which each interview forms an independent narrative entity.

Not discussing the subject of the Sámi did not appear in the interviews as a conscious choice. Based on the interviews, the three most common explanations for not dealing with Sámi culture in art classes were a general lack of information about Sámi culture, concern about dealing with the subject in an inappropriate manner and focusing on other themes that were considered important or interesting to deal with in visual arts. No general conclusions can be drawn about the operating culture of Finnish schools based on the interviews conducted for my thesis. However, together with the theoretical framework for my thesis, the interview material serves as a mirror that reflects the prevailing forms of discourse relating to Sámi culture, othering and colonialism in Finland.

In my thesis, education is seen as a means of achieving power as well as freedom and the active influence of a teacher is never politically neutral. The dominant culture needs to take note of the Sámi issues so that the process of decolonization and the preservation of Sámi culture will be possible in the future. In addition to addressing the Sámi, schools need to examine critically the concepts which the discussion on multiculturalism is based on. We need to pay more attention to questions of race, whiteness and power in order to have an equitable, multicultural education system in Finland.

**Keywords** Cultural diversity, Sámi, indigenous studies, postcolonial theories

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## Tiivistelmä

Maisterin opinnäytteeni problematisoi asetelman, jossa Suomi nähdään yhtäaikaaisesti maana, jonka koulutusjärjestelmää kiitellään kansainvälisesti, mutta joka toisaalta usein ohittaa maan alkuperäiskansan niin yhteiskunnallisella kuin koulutuksellisella tasolla. Hyvinvointivaltion statuksesta huolimatta Suomi on saanut YK:lta toistuvia huomautuksia saamelaisten oikeuksien loukkaamisesta.

Suomalainen koulutusjärjestelmä on vastannut hitaasti monikulttuuristuvan koulun haasteisiin. Koulutusjärjestelmä korostaa kulttuurista moninaisuutta, mutta samanaikaisesti ohittaa alkupe- räiskansamme. Koulutusjärjestelmän voidaan siis sanoa ylläpitävän asetelmaa, jossa saamelaisista ja Suomen suhteesta kolonialismiin tiedetään vähän. Saamelaisuuteen liitetään edelleen vahvoja mielikuvia, jotka perustuvat usein stereotyyppiseen representaatioon saamelaisuudesta lappalai- sena kulttuurina. Todellisuudessa saamelaislapsista valtaosa asuu perinteisten saamelaisalueiden ulkopuolella.

Tutkielmallani pyrin löytämään vastauksia siihen, miten paljon suomalaiset kuvataidekasvattajat tietävät saamelaisuudesta ja minkälaisia asenteita ja tunteita aiheen käsitteleminen herättää. Tutkielmani aineisto on hankittu puolistrukturoidun teemahaastattelun keinoin ja sitä tulkitaan alku- peräiskansojen tutkimuksen ja postikoloniaalisten teorioiden viitekehyksessä. Haastattelut toteutettiin Oulussa ja Helsingissä neljän suomalaisen kuvataideopettajan kanssa. Haastatteluaineisto näyttäytyy tutkielmassani myös erillisenä osana, jossa jokainen haastattelu muodostaa itsenäisen kerronnallisen kokonaisuutensa.

Saamelaisuuden käsittelemättä jättäminen ei näyttäytynyt haastatteluissa tietoisena valintana. Haastattelujen perusteella kolme yleisintä selitystä sille, miksi saamelaista kulttuuria ei käsitelty kuvataidetunneilla olivat yleinen tiedonpuute saamelaisesta kulttuurista, huoli asian käsittelemis- estä loukkaavalla tavalla sekä huomion ohjautuminen muihin teemoihin, joiden käsittely kuva- taidetunneilla koettiin tärkeäksi tai mielenkiintoiseksi. Tutkielmaani varten tehtyjen haastattelu- jen perusteella ei voida vetää yleistäviä johtopäätöksiä suomalaisten koulujen toimintakulttuuris- ta. Yhdessä tutkielmani teorian kanssa haastatteluaineisto muodostaa kuitenkin peilin, joka kuvas- taa Suomessa vallitsevia ilmiöitä saamelaisuuteen, toiseuteen ja kolonialismiin liittyvissä diskurs- seissa.

Tutkielmassani koulutus nähdään niin vallan kuin vapauden mahdollistajana, jossa opettajan aktiivinen vaikuttaminen ei ole koskaan poliittisesti neutraalia toimintaa. Saamelaiskysymyksien käsittely vaatii valtakulttuurin huomiota, jotta saamelaisten dekolonisaatioprosessi ja kulttuurin säilyminen olisi tulevaisuudessa mahdollista. Saamelaisuuden käsittelemisen lisäksi koulutuksessa on tarkasteltava kriittisesti käsitteitä, joille monikulttuurisuuspuhe rakentuu. Suomessa on käsi- teltävä enemmän rotua, valkoisuutta ja valtaa, jotta tasa-arvoinen, monikulttuurinen koulutusjär- jestelmä olisi mahdollista.

**Avainsanat** Kulttuurinen moninaisuus, Saamelaisuus, alkuperäiskansatutkimus, postkolonialismi

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1.

# INTRODUCTION

*“What about the situation with indigenous people in Finland?”*

I felt a blush on my cheeks. Sweat drops on my upper lip.

*“Indigenous. Indigenous people in Finland? Like the Sámi people?”*

We were sitting in a circle in a heavily air-conned classroom in Queensland College of Art, in Brisbane, Australia. I had been in Brisbane for two weeks, learning my way around the city, getting to know my new flatmates and coping with jet lag, (which seemed to last for half a decade). The last thing on my mind was probably the socio-political situation with the Sámi back in Finland. I was panicking, everybody was looking at me. I even forgot the word indigenous. I had not really thought of the Sámi as indigenous people, but more as an ethnic minority.

*“We don’t really talk about them.”*

I muttered. I felt ashamed. That was all that I managed say about the indigenous people of my own country.

I had been studying art education in Aalto University for three semesters when I came to Brisbane for one semester as an exchange student. Even though living in Australia had been my dream for years, at first, I didn’t have a clear picture of Australian society. Being embarrassingly unaware of the power structures still affecting the lives of the indigenous people there, I felt disappointed that the art courses of the Department of Contemporary Indigenous Art were denied to the rest of us. I had imagined diving into the world of aboriginal art and almost visioned how I would come back home with paintings and prints, inspired by a culture that I admired.

Despite of my ignorance in the beginning, I soon started to see the reality of the situation with the indigenous people in Australia and to understand why the Department of Contemporary Indigenous Art was separate from the rest of the University. I learned more about colonialism in Australia, the special character of indigenous Australian visual culture and why appropriation was especially harmful in this context. Brisbane is a very multicultural city, where people come from all over the world to study, work and live.

In spite of the cultural diversity of the city, the indigenous people were often spoken of in a negative and stereotypical way. Colonialism was very much alive and visible. You would come across it in the educational policies, in the art world, you would see it in the names of neighbourhoods and streets and hear it in the way the white Australians would always tell you about their Western roots, which were, of course, not very far in the past.

Living in a very different kind of culture made me see my Finnishness from a new perspective and to realise that similar power structures and attitudes towards the Sámi exist in Finland, too. As a country, Finland is often seen as something special: a small country, which is proud of its struggles and independence, which is a Nordic welfare state with one of the world’s best educational systems and well-known maternity packages. Finland also has a reputation for being the land of forests, sauna and “sisu” (Kallio-Tavin, 2015). As a country Finland has a lot to be proud of. However, I couldn’t stop wondering *what the situation with indigenous people in Finland* actually was and *why* I didn’t know anything about it.

After I came back from Australia, I wrote my bachelor’s thesis on what to consider when teaching about indigenous Australian art in the context of Finnish art education. During the writing process I came to reflect on my questions about the Sámi and the reasons why

we know so little about them. This led me to consider taking up the issue of the Sámi for my master's thesis.

At first, I thought about researching ways in which the Sámi has been taught in art classes in Finland. I also considered taking a deeper look at appropriation in relation to Sámi art. However, the more I read about the Sámi and their history, the more baffled I was about my own lack of knowledge. I struggled with multiple questions relating to my own position as a non-Sámi and wondered if it was even ethical to approach a culture that wasn't my own - especially as a member of the dominant culture in Finland. As I was reading about the Sámi, I soon learned how colonialism and postcolonial theories were strongly connected to the Sámi in the educational as well as the social sphere. My own amazement at my ignorance about the Sámi led to a realization: I needed to focus on that ignorance and approach the topic from my own position as someone who wasn't familiar with the topic beforehand and who didn't have a personal connection to Sámi culture. That is how I arrived eventually at my research question, which aims to discover the depth of knowledge, beliefs and attitudes of non-Sámi teachers concerning the Sámi. All in all, my aim is to deepen our understanding of why teaching about the culture of the Sámi seems to be largely bypassed in the Finnish educational system.

My main research questions are:

**What kinds of beliefs and attitudes might non-Sámi art teachers have about teaching Sámi people's art?**

**Is Sámi culture discussed in visual art lessons in Finnish schools?**

**How do teachers perceive cultural diversity, cultural appropriation and Finland's relationship to colonialism?**

Besides finding a deeper understanding in the literature, I was curious to hear from the teachers themselves about their experiences of teaching about the Sámi. In my view, focusing only on literature wouldn't have been enough to answer my research question. Also, I didn't find any research dealing with it directly. My thesis has a critical viewpoint, which underlines how the Sámi people have lived under domination in Finland. Therefore,

the reasons behind the lack of knowledge is not only an individual teacher's responsibility but its very basis exists on multiple social, historical and educational levels, which need to be discussed. I want to emphasize that my own understanding of the history and colonial aspects in Finland and the Sámi culture in general were minimal before I started doing my literature review. However, it gave me a great chance to approach these themes on multiple levels of knowledge that developed during the process. I hope it has also made it possible for me and the teachers that I interviewed to think about questions relating to the Sámi in the Finnish educational system together in a humble and honest way.

2.

## STARTING POINTS FOR THIS THESIS

In the introduction, I opened my personal reflection on what led me to explore the reasons of why it seems that the Sámi are barely talked about in Finnish educational system. In this chapter I will take a deeper look on the starting points for this thesis.

### Blind spots in the Finnish Educational System?

The reputation of the Finnish education system started to rise as a result of the excellent ranking in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) since the beginning of the 2000s, especially after being the best performer two times in a row, in 2003 and 2006. In addition to the high results, there was very little variation in the performance of Finnish pupils, which is an indication of equality both within the classes and between the different schools. Compared to other European OECD countries, Finland also spent the least amount of money per pupil and the lowest amount of time on instruction. Finland's success in education and overall welfare has been receiving a lot of international interest with Finland being referred to as a role model for the rest of the world (Schatz, 2016).

Studies on Finnish education system have provided interpretations of why the system is so successful. According to Schatz, the three most common explanations are justice and equality, autonomy and freedom, appreciation of teachers and trust in the educational system. However, to come back to the question I got asked in QCA Australia and to my research question, I want to raise another question: So how is it possible that the highly and internationally praised Finnish education system allows such a big "blind spot" to exist so that the Sámi are barely acknowledged.

Even if it can be said that the Finnish education system has earned its praise, not everything in Finland's educational system is perfect. Finland's ranking in PISA has dropped down significantly from the early years of success, which has raised a number of questions. According to Schatz (2016) Mulinari, Irni, Keskinen, Tuori (2009) and Kallio-Tavin (2015) Finland hasn't met the needs of a form of education that is increasingly culturally, linguistically and ethnically diverse. Schatz also notes that teachers' independence has its negative aspects as well (little control over updating knowledge and freedom to choose what and how to teach) and teacher training programs don't always give the best tools for the teachers for working in schools (Schatz, 2016; Kallio-Tavin, 2015). From the perspective of this thesis it is also essential to point out that the equality and equity are not a reality for the Sámi, neither in society nor in education. According to Rauna Kuokkanen (2007) assimilation is still evident both in practice and in a lack of appreciation of their

culture. The strong belief for Finnish educational system and its status as a welfare country may also part of the reason why Sámi decolonial processes have been minimal. (Kuokkanen, 2007. See also Elridge; Keskitalo, Määttä, Uusiautti, 2013). To understand a culture, we need to be aware of its cultural and historical narratives. For this reason, we can't separate the discussion of colonialism from education concerning the Sámi and about the Sámi. Recently, the lack of discussion about colonialism in the departments of history resulting in the possible lack of knowledge among history teachers has been a topic in Historians Without Borders panel discussions (Gusatinsky et.al, 2018) based on a report by Emma Hakala & Iina Hakola (2018). In my thesis, I'm also looking for answers to explain the lack of knowledge of the Sámi from the colonial perspective and history of the Sámi.

My thesis focuses on art education in Finnish upper comprehensive and high schools. The interviewees selected for my research were not selected on the basis of whether the teachers knew about having Sámi pupils in their schools. The current situation in Finland is that over 60% of the Sámi live outside their traditional homeland Sápmi (Keskitalo, Uusiautti, Määttä, 2012). It is also important to be aware of the fact that there is not one Sámi culture, but the nature of the Sámi is diverse historically, culturally, linguistically and geographically. Due to the scope of my thesis, the answers to what needs to be taken into account in order for the Sámi schools to flourish such as curriculum that would meet the needs of the Sámi and the school structure in Finland that bypasses the Sámi as its own nation.

Moreover, my aim is to find more perspectives for breaking the power structures also in contexts where the Sámi culture is not visible and as stated before, to try to understand the reasons behind the silence about the Sámi in the Finnish educational system. My thesis also seeks to answer questions about how understanding, knowledge and the active, influential participation of teachers have a significant role in whether the Sámi are discussed in Finnish schools or not – and how this either reaffirms or breaks down colonial power structures.

## The theoretical framework

The literature used in my thesis comes from multiple fields, but focuses on postcolonial theory, critical pedagogy and indigenous studies. Feminist pedagogy is also present throughout my research. My personal starting points affected my literature review, therefore it doesn't focus on one specific theoretical framework, but aims to look at the subject from various different viewpoints. The subject of my thesis is fairly extensive. For this reason, I feel that exploring it from many different perspectives is essential - especially when it also tries to find reasons for why it seems that many Finns don't know a lot about Sámi culture. In my thesis, I also try to bring together multiple discussions that are relevant to the subject.

From the point of view of my thesis, it is relevant to say that the subject has been studied previously, for example, from the viewpoint of tourism, appropriation and education taught in Sámi languages as well as from the perspective of ethical Sámi school studies. The power structures affecting the Sámi in Finland have been studied from a post-colonial perspective by Rauna Kuokkanen (2007, 2004, 2002), who is also one of the main influences on my thesis. According to Kuokkanen, the Sámi's position in Finnish society and education hasn't been critically studied that much through post-colonial theories (Kuokkanen, 2007). That's why I am also aiming to deepen the post-colonial discussion about the Sámi in Finnish educational system by referring to a few concepts developed by the post-colonial thinker Homi Bhabha.

Mira Kallio-Tavin and Kevin Tavin (2018) have approached the paradigms of multiculturalism and Finnish whiteness and explored changes in Finnish art education and the need for further development. Veli Pekka Lehtola (2015) is my most important source on Sámi research. Leena Heinämäki et al. (2017), research report on the actualizing the rights of the Sámi in Finland, also goes through the thesis.

*My thesis consists of eight chapters. The first and the second chapter introduced my thesis and its starting points. In the third chapter, I describe the importance of my thesis in the field of art education and critical pedagogy. I also open up things that are essential to understand when it comes to indigenous research and the sensitivity of research from different perspectives. This chapter also opens the methods used in this thesis.*



In the fourth chapter, I go through basic information about the Sámi, both from the historical and contemporary point of view, as well as the aspects of Sámi educational history and policies today and the different aspects of discourse related to Sámi art.

In the fifth chapter I present the concepts of colonial discourse and place the Sámi theme in this framework, referring to the information in the previous chapter.

The sixth chapter consists of the narratives, based on the teachers' interviews. Then, in the chapter seven, I analyse the results of my interview research. I approach my subject within a social and educational framework while trying to find reasons why the subject has been neglected. I aim to find answers to my research questions on the basis of my material comprising teacher interviews concerning their attitudes and conceptions of the Sámi culture.

In the final, eighth chapter, I draw the conclusions of my thesis and propose possible further measures to better promote Sámi issues in the field of Finnish art education.

3.

## THE RESEARCH EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will first discuss some aspects of research in art education, critical pedagogy and indigenous studies that are relevant for my thesis. Then I will explain factors affecting the choice of interviewees as well as my research and interview method. Lastly, I will explain the different phases of analysing the interview data.

## Research in art education and critical pedagogy

Research in art education is influenced by, for example, arts-based research and cultural research. Art education is multidisciplinary by nature (Kallio, 2010). It includes philosophy, sociology, psychology, aesthetics, art history, cultural anthropology, educational sciences and critical pedagogy. Research in art education is sometimes affected by negative connotations that are associated with the concept of education. That can lead to a limited understanding of what art education really is. In art education, the word education is broader than how it is traditionally understood. According to Mira Kallio (2008) education is regarded as an activity that seeks to influence human development and growth and thus to achieve learning. Kallio-Tavin states that the subjects in research in art education don't necessarily focus on teaching or learning, and the term 'education' is not always understood as an attempt to develop another person. The importance of art education can be, for example, critical observation of a cultural practice and making its structures visible (Kallio-Tavin, 2010; Kallio, 2008).

Schools have a special influence on how one grows as a human being: we all have access to or have become part of art education through our school history. Our education forms the ways we see, interpret and think as adults as well. Varto states that if art education takes its duties seriously, it can open the way to understanding life, society and humanity (Varto 2014). Like art education, critical and feminist pedagogy encompasses a wide range of conceptual and theoretical perspectives, which are all characterized by a yearning for a better and more equitable society (Lanas et al. 2008).

Critical pedagogy has a critical relationship to knowledge. According to Anttila (2008), epistemologies of knowledge have been getting remarkably little attention among educators. In other words, questions such as what knowledge is, how we can gain knowledge about the world and how a person learns, are central to education, but their critical examination is often neglected. Therefore, critical pedagogy seeks to find answers to the formation of a more equal society through pedagogy by building up a critical awareness in the student.

However, the teacher's task is not to give ready answers. Anttila notes how critical pedagogy is not about preaching or having a better knowledge about something. If doing so, teacher would strengthen and repeat the old, dualistic and rationalistic way with little possibility

for chance. For that reason, those working in the field of education must be aware of the actual nature and relationship of society and school. Pedagogical thinking and practice should live in a sensitive relationship with the surrounding world, not maintaining old thinking patterns, or closing their eyes to new opportunities and challenges (Anttila, 2008; Hakala, 2007; Vuorikoski, 2007). The questions relating to critical and feminist pedagogy as well as art education are all characterized in their openness of the processes of forming knowledge and learning and in the examination of power relations, and in political activity.

Critical and feminist pedagogy challenges the vision of neutral, equal and empowering education and the assumption that education is based on real equality. Instead, teaching is seen something that should aim for liberation instead of assimilation. According to bell hooks (1994)

"...many folks say they are committed to freedom and justice for all even though the way they live, the values and habits of being they live, the values and habits of being they institutionalize daily, in public and private rituals, help maintain the culture of domination, help create an unfree world (hooks, 1994, pp.30.)

Stated by hooks (1994), one reason why absorbing new ways of doing and thinking is challenging is because giving up old ways and being more aware of the grievances causes pain. Multicultural classes include new situations which are sometimes difficult for both teachers and students. Multiculturalism forces teachers to identify the narrow boundaries that have shaped the way of teaching. In hooks' words, (1994) it forces us all to become aware of our involvement in accepting and upholding prejudices. hooks also points out that it is vital for teachers to also have a safe space to discuss openly about their prejudices without becoming a labeled racist.

## Doing research on notions and beliefs on indigenous people

Doing research on indigenous issues as an outsider is a complex task. Not only because of one's personal position as a non-Sámi, but also because studying indigenous people have historically had a huge role in colonizing indigenous people.

According to Kuokkanen, especially anthropology has left permanent scars on how indigenous people feel about academic research, and that anthropology is at the root of creating otherness, defining primitivity and justifying colonialism and imperialism (Kuokkanen, 2002). Varto (2014) states that anthropology and ethnographic research methods have been seen as dangerous because they can expose the relativistic nature of the epistemologies that we believe in. In other words, if another culture has a lifestyle that is equal to ours but different, we can no longer justify our own ways and belief systems so easily as being the only right ones. Similarly, when investigating cultures by ethnographic methods, researchers inevitably inadvertently end up revealing aspects about their own people and culture, themselves and about people in general. According to Varto (2014), knowledge about cultures that were formed differently than ours might potentially lead to a situation where others are seen as something that is just different instead of being less developed. From the historical and indigenous people's perspective, however, the veracity of Varto's suggestion is extremely questionable.

Historically indigenous people have been sorted, described, categorized and judged by western researchers as if they were objects like plants or animals (Kuokkanen, 2002), and even if indigenous peoples are not studied in such extreme ways by using, for example, biological terms or practices like craniometry (skull measuring) today, the hierarchies between western knowledge and everything outside of it are still very much alive. Western academic research methods and epistemologies are often taken for granted and the world-views, knowledge and research paradigms of indigenous peoples themselves are disregarded. For example, globalization, from the Western point of view, seems like an opportunity for cultural diversity and a way to respect and value different cultures. However, globalization also enables Western epistemologies (and the thought of seeing them as the only truth) to travel to the most distant corners and communities around

the world. Kuokkanen (2002) states that, seen from that perspective, globalization is not just a gift to the celebrated idea of cultural diversity, but just another form of imperialism. Acknowledging indigenous peoples' epistemologies and knowledge as equal and recognizing research paradigms employed by indigenous people themselves are also an essential part of the decolonizing process.

According to Kuokkanen (2002) research should be done so that it would benefit the people, that are studied. Kuokkanen writes how, in universities, Sámi people are often seen as research objects and "others" who don't seem to have any connection to the modern world and current society. She notes how the Sámi are not seen as a separate nation and are still spoken about on an abstract level in Finnish universities and schools instead of seeing them as individuals who have their own histories, their present time and future – and who are, in fact, there, with us in the classroom. Kuokkanen states that universities have a responsibility to dismantle the colonial practices affecting the structures in the Finnish educational system that make Sámi students feel less equal. In my opinion, teacher training programs should include more discussion on matters concerning the Sámi and Nordic colonialism, because they seem to be topics that we are clearly not sufficiently aware of.

## Semi-structured interview as a research method on a sensitive topic

According to Kati Kallinen, Henna Pirskasen and Susanna Rautio (2015), the issues and different perspectives that should be considered when researching a sensitive topic depend on whether it is the topic that is a sensitive subject or the group of people concerned. In my opinion, both aspects are present in my thesis.

I feel that the interviews that were done for this thesis created a setting which also dealt with an ignorance of the issues discussed, which was later analysed in a critical frame of reference. According to Raymond M. Lee (1993) telling an interviewer about topics that interviewee might find intimate or difficult is a challenging task. When privacy, confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed and the interview takes place in a non-censorious atmosphere, the task becomes a little easier. Although the teachers interviewed were aware of the aims of the thesis and openly told about their own experience and lack of

knowledge about the Sámi culture, the interviews encouraged the teachers to be vulnerable and open. I also want to point out that just like it is important, when doing research that deals with ethnic groups like the Sámi, to be aware that the group is heterogeneous and consists of various different stories, identities and perspectives, the same can be said about any other group of people. Therefore, I want to emphasize that generalizations about teachers in Finland and about the Sámi cannot be made based on this thesis.

I chose qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews as my research method as it has been shown to be a better way to produce more valid information than survey questionnaires. The method of using semi-structured interviews deals with an individual's subjective interpretations and meaning-making processes and how those processes develop in interaction with others (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002; Lee, 1993).

Doing interviews on sensitive topics requires planning. Firstly, one needs to be aware of one's own position as a researcher. Secondly, one should be aware of the power structures affecting the interview and aim to create an atmosphere that would reduce the hierarchical distinction between an interviewee and an interviewer (Hirsijärsi & Hurme, 2007). According to Sirkka Hirsijärsi & Helena Hurme (2007) a natural, confidential and pleasant atmosphere is considered as a prerequisite for a successful interview. The challenge is that the same things that create a sense of connection during an interview lessens the interviewer's neutrality, which is traditionally considered as one of the most important features of the interviewer. Unlike in a natural dialogue, where both parties are equally sharing their thoughts, feelings and knowledge, in an interview situation, it is important that the interviewee gets to be the one who has the main role (Hirsijärvi, Hurme, 2007). Matti Hyvärinen (2017) points out that it is good to remember that an interview is never a passive form of communication since the dialogue is always affected by the connotations of the previous sentences, facial expressions and even the smallest utterances. The overall context in which the interview takes place includes the different attitudes and interactions of both the interviewer and the respondent

Approaching the topic and presenting it to the interviewee raises the problem of how much the interviewer should tell about the topic. When the research topic addresses things like behaviour that is problematized, it might raise alarm in the interviewee. Feelings of denial or not being able to talk about the matter are not uncommon. On the other

hand, telling too little about the topic can be seen as an unethical solution (Lee, 1993; Hyvärinen, 2017; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002). It can be said that, in order to deal with vulnerability, the interviewer has a lot of responsibility to be transparent about the use of the collected data and to act ethically and responsibly when dealing with information that can be potentially damaging to the respondent. I chose to approach the interviewees with an email where my research topic and method were explained clearly. In the email I also noted that the interview required no preparation or previous experience in teaching about Sámi culture and that I was interested in collecting genuine thoughts about the matter. During the interviews I was also open about my own ignorance of Sámi culture before starting my literature research for this thesis. I also informed the interviewees that the interviews would be done anonymously and that they would have a chance to stop the interview, correct my assumptions if needed and ask questions. Anonymity was ensured by removing attributes such as the names of the interviewees and their schools as well as names of places that had a significant role in their personal history. Each teacher got a pseudonym that is used in the narratives. After the interviews, I wrote narratives based on the interviews, which I then sent to the interviewees and gave them a chance to correct them.

Before taking a closer look at the method of analysing the interview data, I will go through the reasons that influenced the choice of interviewees. One of four teachers corrected a statement. They had remembered that their university studies did include art courses that specifically dealt with art in arctic cultures, including Sámi.

## Choosing the interviewees

As stated by Aikio-Puoskari (2007) the Sámi largest populations outside the traditional regions of the Sami in northernmost Lapland are in Rovaniemi, Oulu and in the Helsinki metropolitan area. However, I decided to leave out Rovaniemi, which is the largest city and the only city in the province of Lapland that has a university and one with a department for art education because, though it is located 300km south of the Sámi heartlands, it is the one place in Finland where the Sámi are definitely not invisible. With tourists from all over the world coming there for Santa Claus, the Arctic Circle, reindeer rides and

the Sámi, there is no shortage of Sámi culture from tourist kitsch to the sophisticated exhibitions in the Arctic Centre Arktikum. Therefore it is hardly representative of Finland as a whole and I was afraid its inclusion might have skewed my results. I also thought that its position may affect how much the Sámi are discussed and represented in schools. Instead, I interviewed teachers in Oulu and in Helsinki both of which have active Sámi communities, and are both cities that have universities with a department of education.

Oulu is the 5th biggest city in Finland, located in northern Finland. The University of Oulu is known for its faculty of education, which has programs in primary teaching, possibility to specialize in art in the field of primary education, music education and the only intercultural teacher training program in Finland, which focuses on globalization and diversity. The University of Oulu is also the only university in Finland that has a program (Giellagas institute) in Sámi language and literature. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Culture awarded the University of Oulu project funding of EUR 750,000 for the Sámi Teacher Training Project in 2018. The application was made by the Giellagas Institute of the University of Oulu and the Faculty of Education, the Sámi Education Center and the Sámi Parliament as partners (Oulun yliopistolle 750 000 euroa saamenkielisten opettajien kouluttamiseen, 2018).

Besides having a relatively large Sámi population, Helsinki was chosen for the interviews for several reason. Helsinki was for a long time the only city where one could study art education in Finland, until the department of art education in the University of Lapland started in 1990 (Lapin yliopisto, 2018). Helsinki is also the only city in Finland that offers bilingual education in Finnish and northern Sámi in both pre-school and grade-school levels. The bilingual class started in August 2018 in Pasila (Hirvasvuopio, 2018). In addition, as the capital city of Finland, Helsinki has an essential role when it comes to educational decision making, teacher education. As the biggest city in Finland, Helsinki plays a big role in Finnish art world and discussion. What happens in the museums and art scene overall in Helsinki probably influences art educators also outside Helsinki.

My personal perspective also affected my decision for these two locations. Oulu is my hometown and I feel connected to the education system there not only because of my own school history in Oulu but also through family and friends that are working in the field of education in the area.

I interviewed four art educators that had work history in teaching art in Finnish upper comprehensive schools and high schools. The reason why I left out elementary school was that even though graduating from the department of art education can lead to various career paths, a master's degree in art education is mandatory for teaching visual art as a subject teacher in upper comprehensive and high schools in Finland. I collected the data between November 2018 – January 2019. The interviews took place in each teacher's classroom and they were recorded, transcribed and later made into narratives. As stated earlier, I contacted the teachers by email. Of the eight emails sent, three were answered and one of the teachers asked for an interview by SMS because I knew him already. With two teachers, we shared common acquaintances, which I had also mentioned in the email. However, I didn't know them personally. One teacher was someone, who I had come across in social media, through her art education related material.

As stated previously, schools were not selected on the basis of whether they had Sámi students or not. The definition of who is Sámi is complex and sensitive. In my opinion, studying the ethnicity of students would have been unethical and not necessary for research. It is also relevant to mention that because of the scope of this thesis, I won't explore possible differences between schools in northern and southern Finland or the differences between art education programs in the University of Lapland and Aalto University.

In the previous chapter I told that every teacher got a pseudonym for the narratives. Before opening my method more, I will shortly introduce each interviewee.

I met Anna in late November 2018, in Helsinki. Anna works in upper comprehensive school that specializes in visual arts. She had lived most of her life in Helsinki and had been teaching for almost 30 years.

Mikko, is a teacher from Oulu. I interviewed him just before Christmas. He was the only teacher that had taught most of his career in high school. Mikko's school specializes in visual arts. Mikko too, had been teaching for over 20 years.

Jenni was the other teacher that I interviewed in Oulu, also a few days before Christmas. She had only been teaching for two years and at the moment she is teaching in both upper secondary and high schools. Jenni has lived most of her life in Oulu area and also

in Rovaniemi during her studies. She was the only teacher that had graduated from the University of Lapland.

The last teacher that I interviewed was Pekka. The interview was done in January 2019, in Helsinki. At the moment Pekka taught in both high schools and upper secondary school. Pekka had been living most of his life in Southern Finland and he had been working as a art teacher for almost twenty years.

### **Narrative approach as a part of my research method**

The interview questions followed the tradition of a semi-structured theme interview. Before forming the research questions, I familiarized myself with the theory and made a preliminary analysis of it, on which I based the interview questions (Hirsijärvi & Hurme, 2007). Although my interviewing method was in line with a traditional theme interview, a narrative approach is present in the analysis of the data. In this thesis, the word narrative refers to the stories based on the interviews. In addition, my method doesn't follow a typical approach for interviewing research, because the narratives and their analysis are in separate parts.

According to Ekonen (2007) narratives are a natural way for people to understand and perceive reality. We live in a world where stories are present in fairy tales and movies as well as in the stories we share with other people. In addition to being part of everyday life, narratives can be used as a research method. In this thesis, people are seen as linguistic, social, and cultural individuals, who form their perception of the world with other people and the world around them. The society and its institutions are not seen as unchanging, but as dynamic phenomena, while also exposed to a process of regularization. According to Ekonen, this phenomenon is called social constructionism, in which all human activity can turn into a routine so that it is taken for granted.

There are several forms of narrative analysis, but thematic analysis is the most common and the most commonly used (Ekonen, 2007). In traditional narrative research, thematic analysis aims to create themes based on the interview data that has formed freely in the interview whereas in a semi-structured interview the themes are created in advance.

Therefore, my approach had elements from both these research methods.

I aimed to give the interviewees as much freedom as possible to respond in such a way that their own experiences, feelings and views would emerge naturally. Although the questions followed certain themes, each interview was unique. The research questions were grouped under four themes, which were: questions about teachers' personal history, their education and work history; questions that aimed to discover how much the teachers knew about the Sámi; questions about how the Sámi were discussed or bypassed in schools; and lastly the theme of multicultural education, which included also the teachers' views on Finland's relation to colonialism. The sub-questions within the themes contained more specific questions, the purpose of which varied between knowledge, emotions and practice.

The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. After that, I began to work on the transcriptions to discover themes and similarities, which I marked with different colors. I also needed to make indistinct parts of the narration more understandable and to remove irrelevant points and repetition.

After that phase, I started writing narratives based on the summarized transcripts and recordings. My aim was to create narratives that would describe the interviewing situation and the interviewee in the most realistic, yet vivid way. I also wanted to avoid interpretation at this point. Obviously, it is good to be aware of the fact that both the research questions and the creation of the narratives were based on my decisions. For this reason, it can be said that the narratives can't be entirely free from my personal interpretation.

As I was writing the narratives, I constantly went back to the transcriptions and recordings to ask more questions. The creative, narrative approach was greatly influenced by an article by Soile Niiniskorpi (2009), *Kasvokkain Annan kanssa – haastattelu, keskustelu, minätarina*. However, unlike in Niiniskorpi's article, which was based on her dissertation research, I didn't want to create my narratives in the first person form. In addition to Niiniskorpi's creative style of writing, I was also inspired by bell hook's (1994) critique of academic writing style. One of the goals in this thesis is to start a discussion on the Sámi's position in education in Finland. Therefore, my decision to include the narratives was also based on my desire to present the interview data in an approachable and engaging way.

One of the reasons why I decided to create the narratives instead of a more traditional method was that, in my opinion, it was possible through narrations to describe the

interviewees in a way that would illustrate them as individuals whose backgrounds affect how they interpret the world. I also wanted to emphasize the fact that the interviewees were all highly educated teachers, who were passionate about art education, in order to show that the possible ignorance of the Sámi culture couldn't be explained by an individual's conscious choice but as a function of structures and values in our society.

Although the analysis of the interview was already present in the narratives, the actual analysis chapter brings narratives and the theory into a dialogue, creating new themes, meanings and providing answers to my research question.

The previous chapters have dealt with the background and methods for my research. The next section deals with the matter itself: Sámi culture and colonial discourse.

4.

## WHO ARE THE SÁMI?

The previous chapters have dealt with the background and methods for my research.

The next chapter deals with Sámi culture, focusing on Sámi in Finland.

### The only indigenous people in the European Union

Sámi are the only indigenous people in European Union and in Finland, who inhabit four states: Norway, Sweden, Russia and Finland. The Sámi regions extend from central Norway to Sweden and Lapland and to the Kola peninsula of Russia (Koslin, 2010; Lehtola, 2015; Heinämäki et.al, 2017). Although the home regions of the Sámi have traditionally been considered to include the municipalities of Inari, Enonteki, Utsjoki and Sodankylä, as previously stated, most of the Sámi living in Finland today live outside the Sámi regions in towns such as Helsinki and Oulu (Lehtola, 2015).

The number of Sámi people are estimated at 90 000, most of whom (50 000–65 000) live in Norway. The next largest populations are found in Sweden (c. 20 000) Finland (c. 8000–10 000) and Russia (c. 2000). It is difficult to determine the exact number of Sámi people in total or within the borders of different countries due in part to the lack of a precise definition as to who should be regarded as a member of the Sámi nation. (Koivurova, 2008; Lehtola, 2015; Keskitalo et al., 2012.) The traditional definition of a Sámi is someone who speaks Sámi as their mother tongue, or whose parent or grandparent spoke Sámi. Lehtola also suggests a person's bond to the Sámi language and culture and a perceived feeling of being distinct from other groups in society as being essential to a Sámi identity, which is defined by a person's authentic subjective experience as well as society's more objective definition (Lehtola, 2015).

According to Kuokkanen (2007), there is not one specific right way of defining indigenous peoples, because they are so different socially, historically, economically and culturally. However, there are definitions of what the indigenous people themselves refer to, such



as the definition of the ILO cobo report. According to ILO cobo report, indigenous people “descent from populations, who inhabited the country or geographical region at the time of conquest, colonization or establishment of present state boundaries.” The definition includes that the group of people have retained at least part of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions. Central to the definition is the idea of a collective group, a separate people with their own culture, identity, community and tradition. When discussing about indigenous people, the word minority often raises questions because, even if the indigenous peoples may be a minority in quantity, they have considerably stronger historical rights to land. They differ from minorities because of their collective nature, which is based on ties to specific land areas. For example, Finnish Somalis are a minority, even though they are more than a quantitative Sámi. Although indigenous peoples have been recognized as indigenous by the authorities in Norway, Sweden and Finland, the Sámi in Finland are still treated as minorities. According to the United Nations report (2000), the Sámi are indigenous as defined by ILO’s definition (Kuokkanen, 2007; Heinämäki 2017; Eide & Daes, 2000). Representatives of states as well as human rights monitoring bodies have seen the self-determination of indigenous peoples as a fundamental tool to protect the culture of indigenous peoples. This position emphasizes the close relationship between indigenous peoples and the land that they have traditionally inhabited and used. Self-determination is associated with issues of natural resources as well as securing the people their right to participate and not deprive them of their means of subsistence (Heinämäki, 2017).

The Sámi are thought to descend from people who were the first to settle in Fennoscandia after the Ice Age 10 000 years ago. Their separation into a distinct ethnic group is thought to arrive from the disruption of linguistic contact due to diverging livelihoods and resulting lifestyles (Lehtola, 2015). Sámi culture did not observe national borders and for a long time the national governments allowed the Sámi way of life to continue by giving them special treatment in taxation, recognizing traditional land ownership and allowing the Sámi to migrate freely across borders in their region. From 1752 to 1852 there were, however, changes in the way the Sámi were expected to observe national borders greatly disturbing traditional Sámi lifestyle (Lehtola, 2015). The solidification of national borders starting from the mid-19th century was achieved by the end of World War II. This development led to the current division of the Sámi region with its concomitant effects on Sámi culture and lifestyle (Henrikson, 2008; Lehtola, 2015).

The land ownership in Northern Lapland is a sensitive topic. Historically, Sámi and Finns have lived and practiced a similar lifestyle in parallel, which increases the complexity of discourse related to land ownership. At present, the Sámi way of reindeer herding and fishing are not possible in a way that is in line with the cultural traditions. The Sámi have emphasized that the most important thing is not ownership of the land in itself, but the right to use the land and waters in a way that is based on the Sámi culture. The cultural ownership of the land has been strongly resisted because it is perceived as a threat to the development and economy of the region (Lehtola, 2015; Heinämäki et al. 2017).

The divergence of Sámi culture is characterized not only by being geographically divided in four countries but also by having nine distinct languages, the biggest of which is Northern Sámi. Three Sámi languages are officially recognized in Finland: Inari Sámi, Skolt Sámi and Northern Sámi (Magga, 2001; Lehtola 2015; Heinämäki et al., 2016). There are great differences between the Sámi’s livelihoods, cultures and languages, both within and between countries. It is important, therefore, to remember the distinctive nature of the Sámi groups when dealing with the Sámi people and their cultures (Lehtola, 2015). Due to modernization some distinctions and beliefs about the Sámi culture have become outdated. However, according to Lehtola, traditional Sámi lifestyles with associated geographical locations help us outline the foundations of Sámi culture.

Reindeer herding and associated lifestyles are traditionally viewed as characteristic features of Sámi lifestyle. In reality, reindeer husbandry is, however, a small fraction of the Sámi’s livelihoods. The biggest group among the Sámi are the Sea Sámi who live in Norway and account for as much as half of the total number of Sámi (Lehtola, 2015). According to Heinämäki et al. (2017), Sámi culture, like other cultures, changes and adjusts to changes in society and the environment, but still includes visible and invisible elements that make it unique. Occasionally, the Sámi’s rights as an indigenous people have been questioned precisely because it diverges less today from mainstream culture than it did, say, a hundred years ago (Heinämäki et al., 2017, 25). Understanding the diversity of Sámi culture can be considered important also for not encouraging cultural stereotypes and for avoiding cultural misinterpretation and misuse. Lehtola cites as an example the abuse of the traditional Sámi dress, which often takes place, especially in the field of tourism (Lehtola, 2015). Sigma-Marja Magga (2001), a researcher at Giellagas Institute, describes the Sámi dress as an important part in building a Sámi identity, both on a personal and

cultural level, creating ways of expressing a person's own personality and including norms commonly agreed within the community and messages that will not open to outsiders. \*

Despite the intrinsic diversity of culture, the Sámi have been striving to express their unity with a national flag, celebrating the Sámi People's Day and instituting the Sámi Parliament\*. Sámi parliaments operate in Finland, Norway and Sweden. Their duty is to act as an authority in matters connected to the Sámi, to look after the language and culture and to speak for the Sámi people. Although the Sámi Parliaments are responsible for Sámi issues both internationally and nationally, they do not have any legislative or executive power (Keskitalo et al., 2012; Heinämäki, 2017). The Sámi Council, which works as a co-operative body for Sámi organizations in different countries, seeks to represent the Sámi in international contexts. The Sámi Council acts in the role of an independent non-governmental organisation in the UN, as well as in the Indigenous People's Council and the Arctic Council (Lehtola, 2015).

When discussing the Sámi's rights, the International Labor Organization Convention no. 169\*, from 1989 is often mentioned. Finland has still not ratified the ILO169 agreement, which would enhance the Sámi's autonomy, cultural survival and promote the process of decolonization. Of the four Sámi states, only Norway has ratified the agreement (Koivurova, 2008). The decolonization process as it relates to Sámi and Finland's colonizing attitude towards the Sámi is further discussed in later chapters.

\* See also Tiina Mattanen's thesis for the University of Oulu on appropriation and traditional Sámi clothing

\* The Sámi Parliament of Finland was founded in 1995 and is responsible for supervising the Sámi's rights and engaging them in the preparation of matters concerning them. The Sámi Parliament may decide on the use of the money allocated to the Sámi, which is the Sámi cultural allowance, the appropriation for the production of teaching material and the Sámi-language social services. However the Sámi Parliament is chaired by the President of the Finnish State. The Sámi Parliamentary elections are held every four years, 21 members have to be elected and 3 representatives of each Sámi society must be elected (Lehtola, 2015; Government proposal to Parliament for amending the Sámi Parliament Act and Chapter 40 Section 11 of the Penal Code, Retrieved July, 28, 2018).

\* (C169 - Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), 2019).

## Aspects of the history of the Sámi people in Finland

In my view it is important to briefly discuss issues related to the history and lifestyle of the Sámi in order to understand why it is justified to talk about Finnish colonialism towards the Sámi. These things are not talked about enough in Finland, letting possible ignorance and silence maintain the dominating position that Finland still has towards its indigenous people (Eldridge, 2016; Gusatinsky et.al, 2018; Kuokkanen, 2007). In addition, Sámi art is strongly connected to land, the history of the Sámi and cultural traditions. Exploring Sámi culture in general also serves as a starting point for my thesis, which deals with ignorance in relation to Sámi culture.

The traditional Sámi way of life was based on the so-called siida system. A siida was a village community, which was in charge of the activities in an area whose limits were clearly defined for a family or community to exploit its resources. Until the 18th century, the state recognized the siidas' ownership rights, which were regarded as close to sacred within the culture. The increase in reindeer herding in the 17th century changed the siida system as it required moving from place to place. Reindeer herding spread to Finland in the 18th century causing a change in Sámi culture, where entrepreneurship led to the selling of reindeer pastures and growing competition. The change also led to a change in culture, entailing settling down to live in one place and emphasizing the role of the core family instead of the community (Lehtola, 2015).

Before the advent of Christianity, the Sámi's worldview included shamanism, which had a broader scope than religion or superstition. Shamanism included the idea of a connection between two souls and two worlds, one visible and physical, the other invisible and uncontrollable. In shamanism, noaidis acted as an authority, whose special skill was to move between the two worlds and so influence them. A witch was consulted in case of illness, which was attributed to the imbalance between the physical and the free soul, as well as issues with lifestyle, weather, animals etc. However, we don't know much about the Sámi's spiritual tradition, as it was violently transformed with Christianization in the 17th and 18th centuries. The cultural traditions either died or became secret, changing the meanings of sacred places and modes of action. Objects of cultural heritage, such as Sámi drums, were destroyed or sent to European museums and witches were either killed or went missing. Places that were sacred to the Sámi, seitas, were destroyed. However,

some elements of shamanism managed to coexist alongside Christianity and influence it (Lehtola, 2015; Keskitalo et al., 2016).

One of the biggest events in the Sámi history in Finland occurred during the Second World War, when the retreating German forces set fire to Sámi regions, especially in northernmost Finland (Lehtola, 2015). The time spent as refugees gave rise to cultural conflicts due to mutual misunderstandings since the Finnish way of life was very different from that of the Sámi, who had led their lives isolated geographically. Because of their weak immunity, many Sámi children especially were killed by diseases in the new environment (Lehtola, 2015).

The war was followed by the process of reconstruction. Roads brought along a large number of people involved in rebuilding and the Sámi regions started to become more like the rest of Finland. The roads also brought with them state agencies, such as health care workers, police and border guards, whose language was Finnish. The old Sámi regions were rebuilt entirely according to Finnish standards, and Finnish practices soon began to appear in the Sámi way of life (Lehtola, 2015). The improved infrastructure and communication have also had the positive effect of creating a more cohesive sense of Sámi identity, less determined by historical and national boundaries. The decline of nationalism, which had been one of the causes of the Second World War, contributed to a better approach to minorities and small nations, and the social status of the Sámi began to be strengthened (Lehtola, 2015).

## Characteristics of Sámi School History

Indigenous education has been coloured by colonial actions and assimilation. (see Morris, Mirin, Rizzi, 2000, Keskitalo et al., 2016; Brady 1997, Eldridge, 2016). Recognizing Finland's assimilation policies and tracing how it affected and still affects Sámi people's education is essential in order to make things better in the future.

Assimilation policies were not as violent in Finland compared to, for example, indigenous people in Australia \*, where children were forced to leave their homes and deported to white families. Yet Sámi children had to attend boarding schools far away from their home due to the new regulations in compulsory education in Finland\*, starting from the early 20th century. Because of the long distances, children lived long periods surrounded by only Finnish culture and detached from their families, cultural ways and habits and even their language (Keskitalo et al., 2016). Finnish schools were based on Finnish culture and Sámi people's linguistic and cultural backgrounds were not acknowledged. Traditional knowledge and skills were not learned in the same way as before and everything that represented Sámi culture, such as clothes, language and the traditional singing of the Sámi, yoik, was questioned and even prohibited. \* According to Lehtola, the lack of teaching in Sámi has had an impact especially on the age groups of the 1950s and 1960s. However the feeling of shame towards the Sámi language and culture was passed on to next generations (Eldridge, 2016; Keskitalo, et al., 2012; Lehtola, 2015). Even though the effects of the Finnish dominance in education might have been more evident for past generations, the reason why those effects seem less important and less dramatic now on an individual level might be that Sámi people have become more assimilated and integrated in the national system of education.

The effect of colonization on teaching is clear. Western thinking has gained an understanding of what knowledge is and the indigenous people's way of knowing and thinking is left

\* In Australia, the situation was worse, with an estimated one-third of the indigenous child being displaced in the 1910s and 1970s to missions or white families. Indigenous people were more classified as animals than humans. Later, education policy changed so that a large part of the aboriginal parents reported their children to schools, but this was against the will of the white Australians. As an example, in 1893 a regulation was made so that a white parent could ask for the aboriginal child to be removed from the class if this is perceived as a threat to health or morality. Even in the 1950s the situation was bad, but since the 1970s, the rights of indigenous peoples began to heal rapidly (Keskitalo et al., 2016).

\* The 18th century Enlightenment and 19th-century nationalism acted as tools of power and harmonization in the nations' civilization projects, where education was a key instrument. In Finland, the Finnish nationalists emphasized Finnishness and the Finnish language, causing the Sámi language to be banned in schools and many losing their mother tongue and thus part of their culture (Keskitalo et al. 2016).

\* Both Norway and Sweden passed laws early in the nineteenth century that prohibited the use of Sámi languages in school and at home. Finland's assimilation policies were not as explicitly stated as in Norway and Sweden (Eldridge, 2016).

aside. Indigenous peoples have historically had little influence over teaching plans and curriculum that are often against their own perceptions, worldviews and values. The educational, political and social rights of indigenous peoples have been other than their own, and this is exactly what makes colonization an everyday occurrence (Brady 1997; Keskitalo et al. 2012).

Language is another topic, which raises questions when talking about Sámi peoples' rights in the educational system in Finland. The municipalities of the Sámi homeland are obliged to provide education in Sámi, where in the rest of the Finland teaching in Sámi is provided by two optional weekly lessons. Although the position of the Sámi language has improved and even recovered in recent years, as many as 75% of the Sámi live outside the Sámi homeland and do not receive education in their mother tongue. The Finnish dominance over Sámi is also reflected in the fact that the Finnish matriculation examination is in Finnish or Swedish, while the Sámi language appears only as a subject, either as mother tongue or as a foreign language (Keskitalo et al., 2012; Keskitalo et al., 2016; "Saame," n.d., 2018). Apart from language, Sámi pedagogy is still dominated by Finnish culture, which is natural due to the small number of Sámi pupils in schools. However, according to Keskitalo et al. (2012) the Sámi should have their own curriculum that could be created from its own special characteristics, such as the Sámi conception of time, place, and knowledge. The Sámi curriculum could then be adjusted to schools outside the Sámi domicile area, where Sámi pupils are scattered, for example via the internet (Keskitalo et al. 2012).

In a small country like Finland, Finnish teachers have always been interested in the contents of the national curriculum (Kallio-Tavin, 2015, p.22.) According to chapter 9 of the most recent national core curriculum dealing with the special questions concerning language and culture:

All pupils are taught in accordance with the common goals and principles of the basic curriculum. The pupils' language skills and cultural background are taken into account in basic education. Each student's language and culture identity is supported in a variety of ways. Students are guided to know, understand and respect each citizen's right to own language and culture (Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet, 2014, p. 86).

Subchapter 9.1 deals specifically with Sámi culture stating that:

In Sámi's teaching, the special aim is to support the pupils' growth in their language, culture and community and give them the chance to embrace the Sámi cultural heritage. The aim is to increase students' capacity to work in the Sámi-language environment, to learn the Sámi language and Sámi culture. culture (Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet, 2014, p. 86).

It is obvious that these goals are not met in Finnish schools. Teachers' knowledge of Sámi people and their culture seems to be limited and the topic is hardly discussed. Most of the time the teaching material used is outdated and strengthens stereotypes ("Saamelaiset," n.d., 2018; Eldridge, 2016). The national core curriculum also draws lines between us (meaning white Finns, whose roots are also Finnish) and others including the Sámi. That can partly be explained by the understandings of Finland being a "mono-cultural society" until the late 20th century. That can be one of the reasons why, according to Mira Kallio-Tavin (2015), "ethnic cultural diversity in education and policy has been relatively slow to appear compared to many other western societies." (Kallio-Tavin, 2015, p.23).

Multicultural teaching is essential for Sámi culture and other ethnicities. If multiculturalism is not taken into account, the Sámi language, culture and customs are also under threat. The design, objectives, educational content and teaching material of Sámi should be based on the cultural characteristics of indigenous peoples in a way that is culturally sensitive (Keskitalo et al. 2012). The Sámi are discussed minimally in Finnish school books, often in a past time, stereotypically and ethnographically. School textbooks do not give a comprehensive, realistic nor modern picture of the Sámi. The almost non-existent presence of the Sámi in the Finnish national curriculum, in the educational materials and in the ordinary school life leads to a situation which weakens Sámi pupils' identity, culture and epistemologies. Ignorance also leads to the question of the Sámi issues being overshadowed because the knowledge of the majority population minimal and often distorted (Kuokkanen, 2007). Sámi culture is perhaps the most visible in the field of tourism, which further reinforces false beliefs and misuse of the Sámi culture as well as strengthens the existing power relations.

The current, modern lifestyle of indigenous peoples is often ignored - especially in the field of tourism. However, it can be said that the Sámi have also been actively involved

in how their current identity as a Sámi is shaped and what kind of images are passed on to tourists. The popularization of Sámi tourism has conveyed the old-fashioned and primitive, stereotypical Sámi imagery as it is considered authentic. However, tourism passes on a false image of what Sámi culture truly is. Indigenous people are represented as primitive, simple, colourful, exotic and so on. However, the tourism industry is not only a bad thing for the Sámi and their culture. According to Seija Tuulentie (2006), the boundaries between the identities of tourists, the Sámi and the Finns have become blurred.

### **Sámi art can be anything, though not everything can be Sámi art**

Our own cultural, personal and educational background and the perception of them always affect how certain terms are used and what meanings they contain. Even if we understand cultural differences and the variability of meanings, for example, with paintings, it is more challenging to feel that the same object, like a painting or handicrafts, would be very different when they are removed from our own presuppositions (Irwin, Rogers & Wan 1999). In order to understand Sámi culture, I am going to briefly open concepts related to this topic. By understanding the power of words and the nature of the western concept of art and how it conquers the world of art education, we have more tools to avoid stereotyping, which creates both hierarchies and otherness between different groups (Rossi, 2009).

In my literature review I found out that when talking about Sámi cultural heritage, there is a discussion between using the term cultural tradition and cultural heritage. Hanna Horsberg Hansen (2016) discusses the differences between these two words in the context of Sámi people's visual culture in her article *Constructing Sámi National Heritage: Encounters Between Tradition and Modernity in Sámi Art*. Hansen points out viewpoints of researchers from different fields of studies. For example, according to social anthropologists Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin tradition is "a symbolic process that both presupposes past symbolisms and creatively re-interprets them." Ethnologist Owe Ronström draws a line between the terms so that tradition is a closed mind space that you can only access by birth or marriage and it includes ceremonies, rituals, dance and

narratives, where as heritage is more open for outsiders and includes physical monuments like buildings and cultural sites.

On the other hand, Harald Gaski (cited in Hansen, 2016) a Sámi literature scholar states that the line between tradition and heritage in Sámi culture is not that clear. Gaski stresses the importance of oral narratives and storytelling and connects them to heritage. In addition Morris et al. (2000) share the idea by stating that in order to understand the importance of the art and tradition, it is essential to understand that in many indigenous cultures, such as Guaraní in Brazil, tradition is "defined as a way one generation teaches the next", which holds the idea of oral narratives as being an essential part of both art, tradition and culture (Morris et al. 2000). Aware of the discussion between the connotations that these terms hold, I use the term tradition to describe the ongoing process of Sámi visual culture that is in line with Handler's and Linnekin's viewpoint (Hansen, 2016).

In addition to the relation between the concepts of heritage and tradition, when talking about indigenous art, the relation between tradition (or/and heritage) and modernity is even more essential. Sámi's traditional crafts, the *duodji* is usually seen as a part of traditional, authentic Sámi culture, while modern art, *dáidda*\* has been seen as non-Sámi. However, the confrontation between the new and the old does not chime with the indigenous culture's ways of the viewing time and tradition. According to Rauna Kuokkanen, assuming that there is a dichotomy between traditions and modernity, the epistemology of indigenous people's way of understanding the nature of time becomes invisible. She suggests that in order to understand indigenous culture, we should give voice to their traditions, methods and ways, instead of forcing the western concept of linear time, where "pre-modern" stands as opposed to "modern". According to religious historian Jelena Porsanger (2011), indigenous peoples do not generally support the idea of confrontation between traditional and non-traditional, but traditional includes the possibility of change (Hansen, 2016; Porsanger, 2011). In other words, if we separate "art" and "duodji", modern and traditional, we might only strengthen the stereotypical mental images about indigenous cultures, assuming that they would not be as equally open to change (that naturally and inevitably happens with time) as other cultures. In this thesis I am using the term art to describe a variety of different visual performances.

\* The word *daidda*, which is Finnish in origin, from the word *taide* which means "art", was adopted to Sámi language in 1970's. The word *daidda* is also linked to Sámi word *daiddu*, which means knowledge and/or sense (Hirvioja, 2014, 2015). In their article Irwin, Rogers, Wan dealing with indigenous cultures, the Paiwan from Taiwan, Australian aborigines, Canadian Sechelt Indians, they stated that the word art could not be translated directly to an indigenous language as there was no such concept (Irwin et al. 1999).

It is hard to translate the word, duodji, from Sámi to other languages. A western viewer might recall duodji being a synonym for handicraft, a functional object with visual decorations. Even though duodji includes those aspects, Hansen (2016) explains how duodji embraces an understanding of nature and gathering materials, as well as identity and spirituality. That's why duodji is strongly connected to its location and culture. The symbols that are used have broader meaning than being purely visual, connecting values and cultural knowledge that are accessible to only those who are insiders of the culture (Hansen, 2016).

Historically, in the 19th century, human-made things were divided into western art and handicrafts, which were primitive\* and exotic and categorized under anthropology. During that time, which is still affecting our concept of art Sámi duodji was seen as artefacts. In 20th century the separation started to change and indigenous peoples' artwork was seen as modern art when it was displayed in an art context and as artefacts when displayed in historical context. However, the power of defining what is art was still in the hands of the western people (Hansen, 2016).

Mission to decolonize has been part of the Sámi art since the beginning. The first well-known Sámi artists were Johan Turi (1854–1936), Nils Nilsson Skum (1872–1951) and John Savio (1902–1938). They wanted to tell non-Sámi people about their culture and correct stereotypes with their art. The goal was also to collect cultural information for the future generations. The active Nordic assimilation process and actions that negatively impacted the life of the Sámi sparked a debate on Sámi's rights and increased activity among the Sámi. According to Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja (2014), "artistic work and political activity supported each other. If Sámi issues had not been discussed, neither would art have been discussed." Assimilation process was an inspiration to art, that gave voices and visibility to Sámi people and strengthened their identity.

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (1943–2001) continued the work that Johan Turi, and Nils Nilsson Skum started and eventually became the best-known artist and representative of Sámi culture. Inspired by Turi's and Skum's work, rock carvings from Alta and patterns from

shamans' magic drums, Valkeapää\* wanted to create visual language, based on traditional Sámi culture. The passion that Valkeapää had for creating his own visual language that would not use the conventions of Western visual art can be interpreted as a sign for his yearning for the past (Hautala-Hirvioja, 2014). His artistic work and social influence can be seen as a part of decolonization process, where the elements that got lost because of colonial policies are now visible (Laenui, 2000).

Another turning point was the battle of protecting the Alta-Kautokeino waters in 1979–1981. The protest gave rise to hunger strikes and demonstrations, which Sámi artists actively took part in. Protection of nature and the political aspects of ownerships have played a big role in Sámi artists work since then. Sámi artist group Masi Group was founded in the late 1970s and made art that was strongly connected to ethno-political movement, including work that they did to protect Alta-Kautokeino\* (Hautala-Hirvioja, 2014).

Masi Group can be considered to be the beginning of the modern Sámi art. Stated by Hautala-Hirvioja (2014), the Finnish artist group Suohpanterror\* continues in Masi Groups footsteps by publishing propaganda art, inspired by pop and street art. Provoking pictures and messages are published online and the messages are related to issues of Sámi peoples' rights such as political actions and on-going colonialism in the North. Some of the issues that Suohpanterror has commented on are Finland's policy on not ratifying ILO Convention No.169 and mining industry that negatively affects reindeer herding and Sámi culture (Hautala-Hirvioja, 2014).

To return to the subject of combining tradition and modern art in Sámi art, like every culture, Sámi are constructed in a relation with other cultures (Tuulentie, 2006). The western concept of art became familiar through schools and the art world and inevitably affected the way Sámi artists expressed themselves and how they identified what sameness is (Tuulentie, 2006; Hansen, 2016; Hautala-Hirvioja, 2014). According to Hansen, the nature of duodji transforms when it is viewed in an art context, for example in art galleries. When duodji is detached from its original use, it loses its practical function and becomes an aesthetic art piece that invites the viewer to look and interpret it (Hansen, 2016).

\*Primitivism is a Western concept, based on a belief that others, e.g. different indigenous people, wouldn't have been able to do realistic sculptures. Primitivism views visual cultures, outside the Western world as simple, lower, wild, undeveloped and naïve. In reality, it shows a lack of knowledge, and a refusal to recognize civilizations, aesthetics and histories other than its own (Peltomaa, T., 2019, personal communication on January 17, 2019).

\* Besides visual arts, Valkeapää was a writer, a musician and an active social influence (Hautala-Hirvioja, 2014).

\* The battle for Alta-Kautokeino river was lost and affected the traditional use of the land among Sámi people. The Sámi Rights Commission was established in 1980 as a direct consequence of the controversy to investigate and clarify the rights to land and nature in relation to Sámi. (Allard, C, 2017, 314)

\* Suohpan is North Sámi and means suopunkki, a reindeer herder's lasso (Hautala-Hirvioja, 2014).

Forms and details may have been originally intended for use, which is no longer present, such as collecting reindeer milk, but the same elements have continued for aesthetic reasons for later use as aesthetic details. Adopting different elements from outside and combining them with elements from traditional Sámi cultural heritage has been important in creating contemporary fine art, where the concept and story is more relevant than the technique and style that are used (Hautala-Hirvioja, 2015). Even though Sámi art has been formed with artistic movements and the influence of different cultures, it is essential to understand that borrowing visual elements from Sámi culture like duodji is controversial and should be understood through the Sámi people's mental colonization. Copying elements can also be talked about with the concept of appropriation, where the borrowed elements are brought to another, already formed culture, in which they are transformed or even completely lost their original meaning (Haig-Brown, 2010).

When contemporary art becomes part of the Sámi culture, it will later become part of the Sámi cultural heritage. It could be said that due to contemporary art there are new possible ways of describing mythology and narratives and make them visible. In that way, they also serve the same purpose as duodji. Earlier, with sacred mythologies, there was no place in the western art context, now it is possible (Hansen, 2016). Finnish artists Tuula-Maija Magga Hetta and Outi Pieski are good examples of modern contemporary Sámi artists who include elements from traditional Sámi culture in their contemporary art work.

5.

## MAPPING CONCEPTS AROUND COLONIAL DISCOURSE

Concern about possible ignorance about the Sámi on both educational and social level together with the poor understanding of the colonial past and racism in Finland are some of the key points in my thesis. Therefore, finding ways to understand why the Sámi are ignored in Finnish schools is strongly connected to the colonial discourse. Even though the official policies and the historical backgrounds differ between America, Australia and Finland, the attitudes towards the Sámi in Finland and the colonization processes are similar to those in countries that are commonly thought of as “true” colonial settler states (Eldridge, 2016; Keskitalo et al. 2016).

The lack of knowledge about both the Sámi people and about colonialism in relation to the Sámi culture were also visible in the interviews for this thesis. Looking at how the Sámi are discussed in Finnish schools and overall in society through a post-colonial perspective enables us to recognize why the colonial past in Finland needs to be addressed more widely and possibly to discover why the Sámi are so often ignored in education.

In this chapter, I will first introduce basic concepts and terms related to the discussion on colonialism and decolonization and then take deeper look at post-colonial theories and the colonial discourse in Nordic countries.

### Colonization and decolonization are more than political processes

Traditionally, colonialism has been seen as a concept relating to imperial politics, the existence of an empire and the promotion of its control (Yazzie, 2000). Colonialism has commonly been seen as a situation where a European nation has colonized a non-European, usually non-white people and taking control over and sometimes occupying their land and affecting the indigenous people’s culture and political structure. According to Yazzie (2000), the starting point for colonialism, as it is most commonly seen, is Columbus’s arrival in America followed by different European countries settling regions including North America, Australia, New Zealand, Latin America and Africa (Yazzie, 2000).

Thinking about colonialism from that perspective only, is, however, very Eurocentric and leaves out the fact that colonialism is a complex system of power relations that exists throughout the world’s history and also between and within countries that are non-European. In addition, European peoples have colonized each other and different ethnic groups within them. This includes the Nordic countries and the Sámi (Gusatinsky, Hagert, Hakala, Hakola, Kullaa, Lehtikoinen, Mubarak, Weiss, 2018). According to Keskinen et al. (2016) Australia fulfills the hallmarks of “true” colonialism; where a European state enters the territory of another nation and formally takes power in that area. In the Nordic context, on the other hand, asymmetric relations between the majority and the Sámi are sometimes explained in other ways as well, Keskinen et al. argues. Being aware of this problem, colonialism is seen as a field of complex power relations where some practices, policies, and institutional encounters can be defined as colonialist (Keskinen et al. 2016). Vuorela has discussed the nature of colonialism in Finland with a concept of colonial complicity, in which I will take a closer look in the chapter Nordic colonialism.

As Laenui (2000) stated it, colonialism is both a social and a political process, based on the idea that some people are of higher value than others and thus more qualified to make decisions concerning them and their affairs. According to this idea, white men have most of the power, and women, people of color and non-Christians are of less value. The ideology started to influence laws and policies, such as assimilation strategies that are central to colonialism. Assimilation means that a group of people, like indigenous



people or another ethnic group, merges or is forced to merge with the culture of the majority population. This can lead to loss of language, religion, culture and traditions and use and ownership of land (Leanui, 2000; Yazzie, 2000). According to Kuokkanen (2004), the effects of colonialism such as assimilation policy, racism, marginalization, and the destruction of colonized peoples' own world view and value systems, are present all over the world. However, the ways and forms of colonialism differ in different time periods and in different parts of the world, depending on local circumstances. Despite these differences, the effects of the colonization process are often similar across the world. This is understandable, because colonial practices are based on the same ideology of the 19th century imperialist culture, which defines non-Western and non-European cultures automatically as being of lower value, Kuokkanen argues (Kuokkanen, 2004).

According to Yazzie, colonialism should have ended after the second world war in 1945, but clearly, colonial history still has its effects on many levels around the world today. Even though decolonization processes have reached far with some groups of people, decolonization has hardly started starting among many indigenous nations. According to Keskitalo, Linkola, McIntosh, Paksuniemi, Turunen (2016), colonialism persists owing to the lack of self-determination of indigenous peoples and the ongoing threat to their cultures today. Moreover, the existence of colonizing policies towards indigenous people is sometimes denied or presented as natural processes of modernization. This argument is something that I myself heard a lot during my stay in Queensland, when talking about the indigenous people in Australia. Keskitalo et al. makes that statement clearer by arguing that colonialism is always determined by one's subjective experience: the same actions can be seen as modernization for the majority population, while for indigenous people they may appear as colonialist (Yazzie, 2000, Keskitalo et al. 2016).

Decolonization can be seen as the opposite of colonization. Decolonization means a long-term process of recognizing and dismantling administrative, cultural, linguistic and psychological colonial power structures. For example, these power structures may have a hidden control on the institutional level, affecting, for example, economic and educational policies. Unlike the African and Asian states, which gained their independence after the World War II, indigenous peoples continue to be affected by the same colonial program that has hindered their decolonization processes (Kuokkanen, 2007). In Finland, colonial power is still visible in the absence of the Sámi's rights to define their own education

system (Keskitalo et al., 2012). and the lack of possibility to impact on land-related issues (Heinämäki et al., 2017).

University of Lapland scholars Marjo Lindroth and Heidi Sinevaara-Niskanen (2018) discussed the process of decolonization for the Sámi, in *Arktinen Arki* (everyday life in the Arctic) symposium in October in Helsinki. They described the current political situation as a "waiting room" for something to happen. According to Lindroth and Sinevaara-Niskanen the feeling of constantly waiting for the decolonialization process to arrive is very common with indigenous peoples around the world. In practice, interaction between the Sámi and the political bodies does occur, but it is superficial and does not seem to lead to a desirable direction. There are several mechanisms of engagement that give the picture that the voices of the indigenous people are considered, but in reality, the effect is minimal (Lindroth, Sinevaara-Niskanen, 2018).

Stated by Kuokkanen (2007) post-colonial theories have provided new opportunities for indigenous research and the identification and dismantling of power structures in society. However, according to many indigenous researchers, as a term "post-colonial" is flawed because it refers to colonialism in the past tense, even though colonialism is still a reality for indigenous peoples. Kuokkanen points out that this is the reason why so many indigenous scholars prefer the term decolonization and "rebuilding" since they express indigenous peoples' current aspirations better. Both theories aim to discuss Eurocentric power culture, which is reflected in the values and practices of Western societies (Kuokkanen, 2007). Both concepts are broad and emerge from political developments protesting against the colonial power, but their roots are geographically different and they were born in different time periods (Gurminder, 2014).

Kuokkanen (2004) also discusses the importance of feminism in the Sámi decolonization process. She argues that the patriarchal system is an integral part of colonization. In her view, the dismantling of colonization requires a thorough understanding of patriarchal hierarchy, since gender inequality is also a form of oppression and linked to the use of colonial power (Kuokkanen, 2004).

## Marked by colonialism – introduction to post-colonial theories

Post-colonial criticism is a set of different theories that describe the effects that European colonialism has had and still has on the economic, cultural, social and psychological life of different peoples of the world - both in former colonies and in other parts of the world. Post-colonialism explores how society has transformed after colonialism and how it continues to affect society. Despite their name, however, post-colonial theories don't only focus on decolonialization processes and the time after colonialism, but also direct their critical gaze at colonial practices in contemporary times. Post-colonial theories are politically motivated and seek to reveal the current forms of power and are concerned with neo-colonialism, race, gender, nationality, class and ethnicity (Kuortti, 2007).

In the context of education, parallel with feminist theories, post-colonial theories explore the power issues in discourses about othering, marginalization and domination, and how these discourses themselves contain power relations. This can be seen, for example, in the idea that if thoughts and actions are determined from the outside, they can turn emancipation in a direction that does not meet the group's or individual's own needs, and therefore do not lead towards empowerment and liberation. Power relations in education and in colonialism have in fact something in common. The epistemologies of knowledge are based on the idea that could be summarized in the sentence "*I know what is best for you*" which in itself contains the idea of othering (Hakala, 2007).

The foundation of post-colonial theories has been attributed to Edward Said's Orientalism (1972), a ground-breaking book, whose main argument is that the difference between the East and the West is an illusion created in Western art and science. Orientalism is formed in a situation, where the images of the East are not based on the actual reality but are a representation based on Western ideas of the East, which stem from the lack of understanding and knowledge of foreign cultures. Such a demarcation divides the world into two unequal halves. Olli Löytty & Mikko Lehtonen (2007) claims that this kind of meaning making process is called othering, where *I/we* and the *other(s)* form a pair of concepts, where the line between the opposites is clearly defined. For example, these could be pairs like: Finns/Sámi, white/black, modern/traditional and so on. Defining the characteristics of the other tells us about the characteristics of the opposite pair as well. For example, if we talk about the dark Africa, we are stating multiple things about Africa

and, at the same time, defining the opposite, Europe as well (Löytty & Lehtonen, 2007; Kuortti, 2007).

*Othering* in art can be seen in the concept of primitivism, where one tradition, Western, interprets the other, primitive. Likewise, what is considered primitive automatically determines the counterpart as advanced. At the same time, the degree of development (which is based on Western values and epistemology) that should be pursued is being defined. Primitivism is never defined from inside a culture, according to Löytty & Lehtonen. For example, Sámi culture appears to us as exotic and fascinating, but for the Sámi it is something else (Löytty & Lehtonen, 2007).

Even though Orientalism offers a useful perspective on the division between the West and the East and how the concept of the Orient includes ideas of a lower phase of development, objectization, primitivism and sexism, it has been criticized for introducing a bipolar setting defining the two cultures. This implies that the colonized nation is passive, poorly capable, suffering, and dominated, only an object of colonial power, ignoring the complex nature of the culture (Löytty & Lehtonen, 2007). According to Bhabha, another key thinker in post-colonial theories, political conflicts are never based on a binary opposition, between rulers and the ruled. He states that such a position doesn't give a lot of information about what is actually happening. This kind of argument, where the two sides are not seen as good or bad, doesn't really follow the common views of what colonialism is about, but it gives us an important tool enabling us to rethink and understand more profoundly how colonialism still affects the world we live in. When we look at the history from postcolonial perspective, we can rethink the faulty image that we have of liberal Western community and what it stands for (Rutherford, 1990).

Besides Said's theory in Orientalism, which is essential to take into account when talking about stereotyping, othering and exotism created in Western art, I found Homi Bhabha's concepts useful for seeking answers for my thesis questions in a context of multicultural education. Next, I will explore some of the main concepts in Bhabha's work that I find most relevant in the context of my thesis.

## Cultural identities through Homi Bhabha's thinking

Homi Bhabha is one of the most important thinkers in the field of postcolonial theories. In his work, he develops key concepts for postcolonial theory, such as hybridity, mimicry, liminality, modernity, difference and ambivalence. Common to these concepts is how they describe ways in which colonized peoples have actively resisted and destabilized power relationships instead of just being passive victims. According to Bhabha, the colonial period should not be seen only as a situation where the colonizers dominated the colonized, but also as a time period when complex and diverse cultural relations and connections were formed (Huddart, 2007). Discussions about indigenous people often include the image of a damaged group of people that have lost their culture. That does not give a full and truthful picture of the Sámi, or any other indigenous people. Instead, it sees the Sámi as passive victims, whose culture is presented as if it was frozen in the past (Dankertsen, 2016). Lehtola (2015) also characterizes this particular notion of the relationship between the Sámi and Finns as something that can't be looked at from only one perspective, in which the Sámi are seen only as victims.

## The blurred lines between cultures and time phases

Bhabha's most important articles are collected in *Location of Culture* (1994) where he develops concepts that unravel a simple division of the world into oneself and another. By convincing ourselves of where our identity ends and the rest of the world begins, we are drawn into defining the rest of the world as other, lower, stranger, different, and threatening. This all comes to the most famous term in Bhabha's work: *hybridity*. The simple definition of hybridity is that cultures have always been in contact with each other and have consequently affected each other. As a result, the idea of an authentic and pure culture becomes impossible. In fact, in Bhabha's thinking, there is no hybridity between cultures. Instead, cultures themselves are seen as a means to stop the development of cultural hybrids (Huddart, 2006). In other words, as I understand it, Bhabha believes that cultures are like outlines, and their purpose is to stop the natural movement of different people, languages, religions, and so on. Cultures are a way to define and place a group of people under a designated appellation, like Finnish or Somali. I also want to point out

that as a term, *culture* isn't unambiguous: it is often connected, or even used as a synonym for nation. Equating cultures to their geographical borders is normative and leaves out the moving, changing and mixing nature of global cultures – also on an individual level (Bhatia & Ram, 2001).

In the context of Sámi culture, hybridity is evident on many levels. Firstly, Sámi culture extends across the national borders of four countries. From a Western point of view, these borderlines are seen as something that separates nationalities, languages and cultural norms. This division has also separated Sámi people, who, finding themselves inside national borders, have assimilated into that specific country adopting their language and cultural habits.

Alongside with hybridity, another concept that defines Bhabha's thinking about the nature of cultures as non-static is *liminality*, which focuses on the idea that cultures exist in intermediate forms between identified, familiar cultures. However, this is not just about the concrete location or borders between cultures, but also about different time phases. In colonial discourse and through colonial history, there has been an emphasis on the different degrees of development of the cultures that have been linked in time. Bhabha's work seeks to introduce the idea that cultures and identities are not static, but in a constant process and thus open-ended (Rutherford, 1990; Huddart, 2006).

Homi Bhabha's theories and concepts allow us to look at the liminality of cultures and in particular that of the Sámi. In addition to being formed in contact with four different dominant cultures, the liminality of Sámi culture is connected to different time phases and global connections – like any other culture. Dankertsen (2016) interviewed Sámi individuals in Norway, many of whom did not identify strongly with Sámi culture and found it hard to define their Sáminess. The individuals who didn't speak Sámi and didn't have a connection to Sámi areas or cultural traditions felt that their identity was somewhere in between these two cultures. Some of them described their own identity as Sámi as not being strong enough to pass on to next generations or even to be something that could be described as "real" Sáminess. Yet, they didn't feel like they were only Norwegian either (Dankersten, 2016).

In the context of the Sámi, it is also essential to emphasize the concepts of hybridity and liminality, since the distinction between so-called pure cultures is a product of colonial discourses. According to Bhabha, a colonial power seeks to divide the world into one and another thereby justifying its power and the persistence of material inequality (Huddart, 2006).

Liminality is also useful when we think about modernity. The problem of modernity rises from its desire to stand in opposition to so-called archaic cultural forms. Bhabha claims that modernity has to be considered from a postcolonial point of view, because colonialism has influenced the values that define modernity. The common narrative of modernity, which is based on technological development and democracy, considers itself self-evident and coherent. According to Bhabha, however, this well-established idea of modernity contains invisible colonial roots that can only be revealed by studying the complex, hybrid, and liminal nature of modernity (Huddart, 2006; Rutherford, 1990). In Dankersten's interviews, the relationship to the past was also something that was connected to decolonization and the interviewees' personal identities. Some interviewees had expressed the idea that, even in their minds, traditional Sáminess was somehow connected to visible, material and performed aspects of Sámi culture, which were eroded by decades of colonization and marginalization. While visible elements such as clothes and language were absent for the interviewees, many of them said that their Sáminess was present when they were making coffee in the morning, taking a walk or spending time with their families. Based on the interviews, Dankersten suggests that people should find new ways to reconnect their past, future and present lives in different ways. In her view, the reconnection and detection of the fragments of the past are necessary for the process of decolonization.

## Beyond cultural diversity

Another point that I want to discuss and find essential in the context of my thesis is Bhabha's distinction between cultural difference and cultural diversity. The concept of cultural diversity is repeated throughout my thesis in the context of values expressed in the Finnish national school curriculum and it was also discussed in the teachers' interviews. Bhabha challenges cultural diversity both as a concept and as a phenomenon and tries to make its inherent power structures and narratives more visible. Like modernity, cultural diversity is also formed in Western, dominant societies. In many democratic societies, cultural diversity is seen as a positive thing, which should be set as a goal and which includes values like equality and freedom. In Western societies, a so-called cultured and civilized person knows and appreciates cultures. According to Bhabha, cultural diversity becomes a sort of bedrock to multicultural education. However, even if the intentions are good, there are two problems with the term, according to Bhabha. Firstly, as a term, cultural diversity is created by the dominant culture and implies that:

*"these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid"*  
(Bhabha in Rutherford, 1990).

When cultural diversity is created, it also leads to containment of cultural difference. Secondly, even in societies where multiculturalism is encouraged we still find racism existing in various forms. For example, when we think of the forced assimilation of the Sami, we might connect them only to the historical time phase when the assimilation processes were more visible and concrete. Yet, in Dankertsen's (2016) interviews with 30-40-year-old Sámi people, the feeling of shame connected to the Sámi identity was still relatable for many of the interviewees. According to Dankersten and Kuokkanen (2004), the shame felt about one's own culture is caused by the colonial past. Bhabha states that the reason why racism exists alongside diversity is that societies that permit diversity, simultaneously mask ethnocentric norms, values and interests (Rutherford, 1990, 208). In other words, Bhabha tells us how the concept of cultural diversity is based on Western values and epistemology, and aims for justice and equality in the world, but remains superficial on many other levels. That leads to a situation where societies that encourage cultural diversity simultaneously refuse to see their own power structures.

In Bhabha's words: "This kind of liberal relativist perspective is inadequate in itself and doesn't generally recognize cultural and political judgements." (Rutherford, 1990). In the context of the Sámi people in Finland this could, for example, mean the reluctance to recognize the on-going assimilation process, because it is not so evident and violent as it was before.

Homi Bhabha's post-colonial analysis has a lot to offer when trying to understand the colonization of the Sámi and the decolonization process. For example, the concepts of mimicry and ambivalence would offer great tools for exploring the relationship between Finns and the Sámi, and liminality and hybridity would be useful in discussing the different layers of cultures and their history, for example, in Lapland, where both the Sámi and Finns feel a strong connection to the land. In my opinion, Finnish schools with students of multiple cultural backgrounds might find the concepts of hybridity and liminality useful for understanding the nature of cultural differences better. In addition, Bhabha's ideas of culture offer an interesting counterpart to the idea of cultural appropriation, where cultural elements are seen as something that belong to certain cultures. I will come back to this notion in the analysis of this thesis.

## Nordic colonialism and recognizing whiteness

One of my starting points was to develop a critical viewpoint on the celebrated Finnish educational system and colonialism in Finland in general. In this chapter I will come back to the themes which I discussed briefly in the beginning of the thesis. I will first explore the concept of colonial complicity as a term and then take a closer look at some factors that affect the way colonialism is visible but often not seen in Finland. These are a strong belief in Finland as a welfare state together with whiteness and race in Finnish culture and how they are dealt with in education. These texts and examples are viewpoints on some phenomena in Finnish society, thus not all of them have a direct bearing on the Sámi. However, they all are connected to the same ideas of colonial Finland and discussions around race and power-relations. Therefore, they concern the Sámi as well as other ethnic groups in Finland.

Ulla Vuorela (2009) developed a concept of colonial complicity to describe the forms of colonialism in a country, in this case Finland, that has not historically been a colonial center in Europe, but which still cannot be seen as innocent or outsider in relation to colonialism in the world (Vuorela, 2009).

"Complicity in its dictionary meaning refers to a 'participation in a crime'. The postcolonial literature mostly uses it with reference to participation in the hegemonic discourses, involvement in the promotion of universal thinking and practices of domination." (Vuorela, 2009).

Vuorela claims that in order for us to be accepted by the centers, we needed to play by their rules: accept their hegemonic discourses, theories and epistemologies (Vuorela, 2009).

My argument is largely that, even if we were not at the heart of the colonial conquests, there are several links that connect us at least with the kind of knowledge that arose in the context of, or even in support of, the colonial projects. Even if we were not colonial subjects, the argument can be made that our minds were 'colonised' into an acceptance of colonial projects, and we took on board the then 'universally' accepted regimes of truth (Vuorela, 2009).

According to Vuorela, Finnish researchers have also not been in the marginal when it comes to early formation of anthropological theory. Due to Finland's northern location, Finnish scholars had access to locations in Siberia and Alaska and took actively part in building evolutionary theories about other continents as well. For example, writings by Finnish scholars about people living in Russia and further in the east resembled the colonial discourse about the south and was just as racist, othering and referred to primitivity (Vuorela, 2009). However, having an active role in accumulating anthropological knowledge reflecting the Western ideas of the European centers is something that is often not recognized as part of this process (Vuorela, 2009). Finland's ties to colonialism are commonly regarded as weak (Mulinari et. Al, 2009) but Finland, too, had its own active role in colonizing. For example, in the early 20th century, Finland planned to colonize Namibia for a time, even though the plan never actualized. More importantly, once Finland became independent in 1918, colonizing the Sámi was both effective and evident and made Sámi people retreat to Lapland from the South (Vuorela, 2009; Rossi, 2009).

Another part of Finland's history and its colonial complicity is that Finland, too, was colonized, first by Sweden, then by Russia (Rossi, 2009). Vuorela also states that the fact that Sweden sent Roman Catholic priests and bishops to convert Finns has been seen akin to later forming of colonial states around the world, yet the comparison is questionable (Vuorela, 2009). Acknowledging these aspects in Finnish history can bring clarity to why so many people, and even some researchers\* seem to think that Finland is free from the burden of colonialism, because it didn't have colonies of its own and it feels more like a victim than an active participant in worldwide colonial processes (Vuorela, 2009). Vuorela argued that using postcolonial theories as a relevant theoretical framework for understanding Finnish history might prove controversial. In contrast, Rossi (2009) states that discursive and visual complicity in colonialism is very much alive in Finnish culture and therefore the tools provided by postcolonial theories are extremely helpful in understanding some aspects of Finnish society. However, she also questions the possibilities of using post-colonial theories in a country where the majority of the people seem to think that their country hasn't participated in the process of colonization (Rossi, 2009).

The belief in Finland's innocence concerning colonial activities being strong among us Finns, partly through not having our own colonies, made it possible that Finland, like the other Nordic countries, did not go through a period of critique of colonialism (Mulinari et al., 2009; Vuorela, 2009). Similarly, unlike many other European countries, Finland was not a target of any liberation movement organized in colonies. Whereas many European states were forced to deal with postcolonial politics, the Nordic countries could remain as outsiders and didn't deal with the power relations related to colonialism. Kallio-Tavin (2015), argues that this can explain why we haven't had enough critical discussion about racism and power relations. Mira Kallio-Tavin and Kevin Tavin (2018) also claim that the general climate in Finland seems to refuse to problematize the power of whiteness or become involved with the issue of racism. In addition, Kallio-Tavin and Tavin referred to Helena Oikarinen-Jabai's (2014) notion that the word race is barely used in Finland, which shows how the denial of whiteness is present in both academic and everyday language and discussions. Race as a word was replaced by culture after the Second World War due to its negative connotations of Nazi racial science, racial hygiene and Nordicism. Replacing race with culture created an illusion of a "raceless" Western, modern world, which paradoxically ignored the fact that race had an essential role when European national states were formed (Kallio-Tavin & Tavin, 2018; Oikarinen-Jabai, 2014). In Oikarinen-Jabai's view, the transition in educational discussion from race to identity and development is still visible in the discussion of cultural diversity, which Finns use mainly to describe cultures other than themselves. Therefore, whiteness and Finnishness are considered self-evident. A strong belief in equality and lack of racism is rooted in Finnish society and racism is seen mainly as intentional, officially reported, obvious and overt acts by individuals (Oikarinen-Jabai, 2014).

The idea of Finnishness has been largely based on the idea of a welfare state, which has long been isolated from the rest of the world and which is perhaps perceived as less violent and troubled than many other European countries, such as the UK and the Netherlands, which have a colonial past. Finnish nationality is perceived to be strongly attached to Finnishness and therefore minority cultures, like Sámi, Romani, Russian or Somali are often neglected. Moreover, it is not unusual to hear Finns talking about the lack of racism in Finland due to its small immigrant and ethnic populations. According to Kallio-Tavin & Tavin, division between rooted Finns and others is often present in discussions in the media and the message that it carries is that only Finns who are white, speak Finnish

\* According to Kuokkanen, even some Finnish researchers have questioned or even denied Finnish colonizing of the Sámi. For example, Kuokkanen mentions historian Jouko Vahtola, who has argued that the actions in Lapland have not been colonialism but modernization that needed to happen and that was also beneficial to the Sámi. (Kuokkanen, 2007, 146)

and who have a long family history in Finland are the real Finns. Kallio-Tavin & Tavin explain how this is understandable for a country that is relatively young and small to do so in order to build its identity, but the implications that it carries, such as racism, othering and the denial of whiteness, are often completely bypassed (Kallio-Tavin & Tavin, 2018). Before taking a closer look at some examples of how the denial of whiteness and racism is presented in Finnish visual culture and media, I will shortly discuss issue of whiteness in Finnish educational system.

As mentioned in the chapter Starting Points for the Thesis, Finnish educational system is based on equality, which is not the case in most countries in the world. The strong belief in Finnish welfare system is that the state will take care of us and everyone has the same possibilities in life and in education (Kallio-Tavin, 2018, Oikarinen-Jabai, 2014). According to Oikarinen-Jabai, the belief in equality leads, however, to a situation where differences are ignored. In her article *Jälkikoloniaaliset lähestymistavat haasteena luokkahuoneissa* (Post-colonial approaches as a challenge in classrooms) (2014) she tells about a research project Taikomo (1997-2000) which dealt with questions of art education in a multicultural school. In the school, the question of equality was bypassed by arguing that Finnish school is equal and differences don't matter in school policies. Oikarinen-Jabai says that talking about differences and race was thought to produce attitudes that had been forgotten or not adopted by Finns. Since the differences are not discussed, they are also not addressed. Yet, the students were sorted by their differences, such as sex, ethnicity and class and teachers talked about the students with reference to their ethnicity. Assignments intended to discuss multiculturalism included stereotypical visual performances of another culture. Sámi were presented alongside other ethnicities and Romani culture was ignored altogether. According to Oikarinen-Jabai, there has been a lot of discussion in relation to school policies and the national curriculum about the development of a multicultural school, but in practice the change has been insignificant and counterproductive, for example, at the expense of preserving Finnish traditions (Oikarinen-Jabai, 2014).

Even though Taikomo offered good view points on multicultural art education, it is worth remembering that the research project ended almost ten years ago. During that time, Finland has gone through a wave of migration, which probably has had its effects on school policies as well. According to Peter Kariuki, the need to accommodate refugees and migrants from formerly colonized countries was, in fact, the turning point when

Finland had to wake up to the postcolonial critique and learn to live like a transnationally connected state (Vuorela, 2009). However, we can question if it managed to do so.

As stated before, the division between the so-called *rooted Finns* and *others* is a commonplace in Finland. In addition to the media, this dichotomy can be heard in conversations even at universities. In Oikarinen-Jabai's words academic education isn't a guarantee of broad mindedness (Oikarinen-Jabai, 2014). She notes that the viewpoints in postcolonial and feminist theories seem foreign to many university students. Post-colonial, feminist thinkers question the universality of femininity, yet according to Oikarinen-Jabai, cultural differences are not acknowledged by students, who may have strong prejudices about women who are dominated by their cultures and religions and who cannot or aren't allowed to speak for themselves (Oikarinen-Jabai, 2014). In my opinion, these mindsets derive also from our own ideas of orient, since according to Said, women in the Eastern countries are often described non-academic and passive.

In addition, Oikarinen-Jabai states that non-European art, Afro-American theories or indigenous peoples' goals in education seem distant and they are hardly discussed, because Finnish educational system is so strongly connected to Western tradition. Kuokkanen agrees with this notion and adds that in the educational system, the interests of people living in Finland are expressed in a uniform manner (Kuokkanen, 2007). Kallio-Tavin has also discussed the denial of whiteness in the context of university education in the program of art education. She points out that the Department of Art Education is a homogeneous group of students who are (almost always) white, with Finnish roots who have been interested in studying and practicing art and who are non-disabled. Mira Kallio-Tavin (2015) states that similar opinions about the lack of racism in Finland and the avoidance of the term race is common among art education students as well. She points out that the reason why the students don't want to talk about differences might be that they avoid labeling people. However, the problem is that, when focusing on everyone's individuality and equality, without admitting differences, the groups will be bundled together and the differences are bypassed or even denied. In Kallio-Tavin's words:

"Turning your back on differences also allows privileged groups to ignore their own group specificity and to perpetuate a type of cultural imperialism, by creating norms that express this particular point of view. The privileged group the appears neutral and universal, objectifying everything else as other" (Kallio-Tavin, 2015, p.25.)

In the context of art education, it is important to think about ways in which visual culture reinforces colonial power relationships in the world. According to Rossi, colonialism is a permanent part of language and imagery and is therefore one of the reasons why the Nordic countries can also be considered as colonizing countries (Rossi, 2009). Kallio-Tavin states that we are constantly affected by a overflowing and global visual imagery. Images offer both pleasure and information and challenge, initiate or reinforce values and beliefs. How we learn to see ourselves and others are affected by how individual identities and power relationships are formed. On one hand, we actively choose visual content, but on the other hand we are also constantly exposed to visual culture, which includes stereotypical imagery about ethnicity, race and nationality. In Kallio-Tavin & Tavin's words, "our identities are shaped and limited in particular societies in part by available cultural and linguistic codes, signs and representations" (Kallio-Tavin & Tavin, 2018).

Let's finish with a few examples that draw on the things discussed in the paragraph. These examples are discussed in Kallio-Tavin & Tavin's article Representations of Whiteness in Finnish Visual Culture (2018) and Rossi's Licorice Boys and Female Coffee Beans: Representations of Colonial Complicity in Finnish Visual Culture (2009) and the last example is from my own experience. All three examples critically discuss whiteness and focus on visual representations of blackness. However, in the context of my thesis, whiteness is seen in a broader way than only as a skin color and therefore these examples offer valuable information about racism in Finnish visual culture and the question of dealing with the Sámi.

In 2006, a British Europarlamentiar Claude Moraes made a complaint to Fazer about their licorice candy wrapping paper which had a caricature of a black faced figure, Golliwog. The logo dates back to the 1920s, when advertizing and packaging design were not adverse to kitch sometimes including colonial imagery. Fazer's logo was perceived as incorrect, outdated and racist, which led Fazer to decide to re-design the logo a year later. However, replacing the logo was not unanimously accepted in Finland. There were two camps: some thought the logo was outdated and disgraceful, but others felt that the logo was a part of Finnish cultural heritage and the character in the logo was described as joyful, sweet, of its time and nostalgic. As many as 14,000 Finns signed a petition to maintain the logo. According to Rossi, the patriotic movement to preserve the wrapping paper illustrates a belief in a justification based on the view of Finns as a homogeneous white group. The

wrapping paper was defended on traditional and nationalist grounds, although in reality the image can best be described as an illustration of ignorance, exoticism, and colonialism. According to Rossi, blackness doesn't carry the same historical baggage in the Nordic countries as it does elsewhere. This may partly explain why the history of this racist picture was unknown or ignored or seen as relevant to Finnish identity.

Another candy-related example given by Kallio-Tavin & Tavin is the traditional Finnish chocolate-covered candy by Brunberg called "*Negroes Kisses*". This name was changed to plain "*Kisses*" in 2001. However, the picture on the box remains the same, representing blackness stereotypically as scantily dressed, primitive and sexualized (Kallio-Tavin & Tavin, 2018). Then too, many Finns were against the renaming, even though the decision had been inspired by negative comments received by Brunberg concerning the use of the word negro (Saarelainen, 2001).

The last example shows how the discussion hasn't changed a lot in the past few years. In November 2017, The Finnish department store Stockmann released a video where the employees performed a traditional children's Christmas play, Starboy, (Tiernapojat) while wishing merry Christmas to their customers. The Starboy play traditionally includes a character called the Moor, whose face has been blackened to show ethnicity and Stockmann's Christmass video included the said character (Määttä & Torvinen, 2017).

The same day as Stockmann released their video, Yle, the national broadcasting company, published an article where Päivi Puukka (2017) queried why this form of black-face culture included in the traditional Finnish Christmass traditions is not more commonly seen as racist, even though a similar, traditional Dutch character, Zwarte Piet, is widely criticized due to the colonial past of the Netherlands . Puukka argues that the fact that there are so few black people in Finland does not excuse our tolerance of black-face culture and asks why so many people deny being a racist while defending a racist tradition (Puukka, 2017).

Even though Puukka's article and the Stockmann video were not connected, they together produced a storm in the media, which again revealed how ignorant the Finns were of the colonial past. The video was soon removed by Stockmann with apologies for not having appreciated the offensive and denigrating aspect of painting the face of a character black. After removing the video, Stockmann started to receive criticism from many quarters for



criticizing the Finnish cultural heritage. The internet discussion websites were buzzing with negative comments, calls to boycott Stockmann and general bewilderment as to why such a cherished Christmass tradition should be considered as racist (Määttä & Torvinen, 2017).

The discussion about the Starboy play illustrates, to my mind, the extent to which Finns tend to ignore their privileged position and the power structures erent in our society.

6.

## THE NARRATIVES

In the following chapter I will introduce the interview data followed by an analysis in the next chapter.

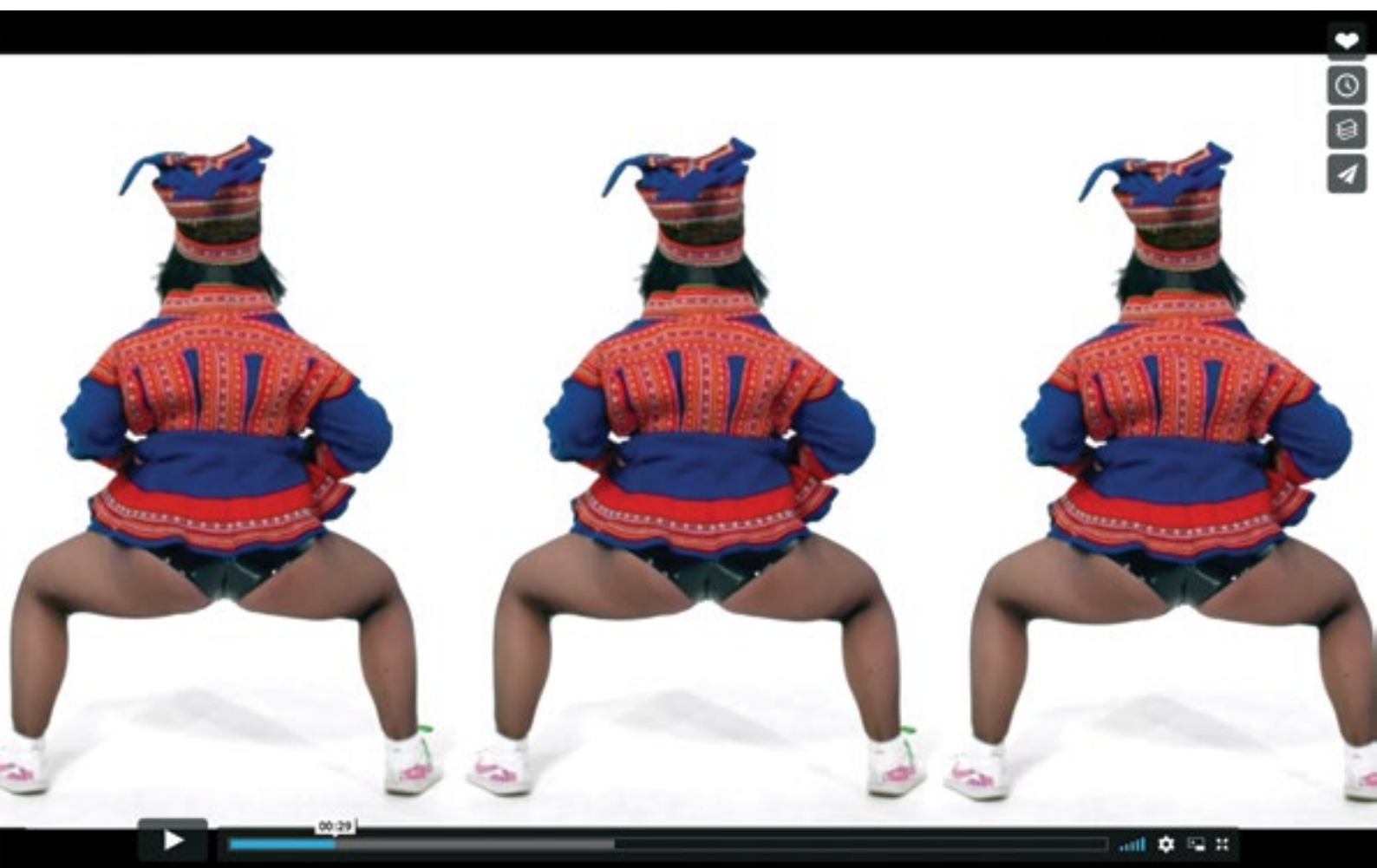


Figure 1: Hiltunen, J. (2012). Grind. Retrieved March 26, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://vimeo.com/44392653>.

## Anna

This interview was with a teacher whose name I changed to Anna. Anna has lived in an African country and is married to a person from the same country. Anna's relationship to that country is deep and has a big role in her personal history. The reason why I'm referring simply to Africa or "that country" is my conscious choice to guarantee Anna's and her family's anonymity. Africa is a big continent comprising many countries with different cultures, ethnicities and languages. Simplifying African cultures as one is an essential part in the discussion around stereotypes and racism related to Africanity.

*Hi,*

*Thank you for contacting me. Sure, I can participate in the interview, even though I felt a pinch in my professional conscience – I haven't discussed The Sámi in my lessons.*

Anna is the first teacher that I interviewed. The warm and vulnerable tone in her emails made it easier for me to start my journey through the interviews. As I was sitting on a bench in the school lobby I immediately saw how multicultural the school is. I hadn't expected that. I heard students speaking in Arabic, Russian, Swedish and other languages that I didn't recognize. Anna couple of teenage girls came and sat on both sides of the bench with me and one after another, their friends gathered around me, braiding each other's hair, leaning over me. They didn't seem to mind that I was there. When Anna rushed down the stairs she laughed and said "*they must have thought you are a student*".

The atmosphere was immediately relaxed and chatty. Anna explained that the day had been a little bit busier than usual, but her presence was still filled with positive energy. We started with some basic information about Anna's background and work history. Anna has been teaching for 30 years, of which 29 in the same school that she now works for. Before starting at the University of Arts and Design in Helsinki, she had studied art history. Most of her career, she has taught in comprehensive school, specialized in arts. Previously, when she started working at this school, they also had a high school in the same building, where she taught as well. Anna explained how lucky she has been with her career, even though the job description and duties have grown bigger and include more than just teaching visual art. According to Anna, being an art teacher demands being active in the art world, not just school.

"I feel that it is part of my job that I stay au courant and that I use my spare time to go to exhibitions and follow all the phenomena in the art world, just so that there is something to draw ideas from for this work. In a way, the line between work and free time is blurred."

Anna told me that work had a big role in her life. Besides being devoted to art, she said working with teenagers gives her great joy – the students describe her as "relaxed but strict".

I introduced the topic of the Sámi by going back to the question of why Anna had agreed to be interviewed. She laughed and said that, like many teachers, she aims to be a good person, and feeling guilty in this respect she had felt compelled to think of reasons why, in fact, she hadn't paid attention to the Sámi. Moreover, Anna said that she saw the interview as an opportunity to stop and take a closer look at why the Sámi were not talked about and why she, too, had ignored them. The similarity between her master's thesis and my thesis was also something that we both found interesting. I had shared with her my starting points for the research and had told about my experience in Australia. Referring to that, she explained how she had a similar experience in Africa, where she researched the stereotypes in the representations of Africanity and the similarities between African and Finnish cultures. When I reframed my question and asked if she felt that it would be interesting to reflect on what ignorance consist of, she agreed enthusiastically.

Not having any connections to the Sámi is, in Anna's opinion, one of the reasons why she hasn't paid attention to the Sámi, but due to her own experiences and knowledge of the African country that she knows well, the culture of that country is very visible in her teaching. She told me she knows that country even better than she knows Finland.

According to Anna there are two main reasons why some cultures are more highlighted than others from the teacher's perspective: firstly, one's own interests. Secondly, knowing a specific culture deeply and hoping that even if that culture is geographically far, pupils could still learn about the diversity of the world and become more open to different cultures through the example of one culture. Moreover, Anna added that when I had contacted her, she had started to reflect that the Sámi are, in fact, the indigenous people of Finland and therefore special, or even unique in relation to other cultures in Finland.

In addition, I got the impression that in Anna's point of view cultural diversity might have an effect on why Sámi culture has been ignored. Anna cited as an example Chinese culture in her school. The school offers Chinese as a subject, therefore they have a lot of Chinese students. As a result, Chinese culture is very visible and celebrated in the school, for example, during the Chinese New Year.

"Well of course, the kids (with different backgrounds) are here. And we have Chinese as a subject so we discuss Chinese culture, but not Sámi culture... nor the Romani. Well. Minorities."

Cultural diversity in the school consists of a wide variety of cultural backgrounds and identities, she added. Some students have only been in Finland for a short period of time, some are second generation immigrants or adopted as infants. The new medias in visual arts together with cultural diversity made her wonder why certain visual cultures are discussed and some are being left out. The choices are endless when it comes to choosing what needs attention and what are the things that need to be considered when making pictures.

"The starting point is that, it could be said that the world has come to us, it is here. --...for example, we discuss topics like why Somalis are interested in making ornaments or so on. But, then again, how about our own indigenous people?"

It seems to me that there are times when the overload of things that need attention in art education feel overwhelming to Anna. For example, she told me that she often needs to explain that unlike her students, she isn't "*a digital native*", even though social media and digital tools have an essential role in art education nowadays. She used sentences like "*so much to absorb*" and "*I feel the pressure of digitalization*" to describe her feelings for the current trends in art education. However, she also made it clear that the change has made art education more sensitive and inclusive when it comes to racial issues and students' own cultures in education. She mentioned as an example the change in gender sensitivity and how she wants to absorb new ways of thinking and see them in action. Anna genuinely tries her best and told me the terms she uses instead of calling the students boys and girls. Besides seeing the diversity of gender, she came back to the topic of cultural diversity in classes and said that multiple protocols are sometimes overwhelming.

"We have so many students that come from different cultures, some also born in Finland, their way of speaking to one another, yo nigga, hey nigga, and so on, it's like hmm, they have their own sub-culture and habits. It's like, who can say what to whom?" She phews and laughs.

Having taught for almost three decades, Anna has a clear picture of the late 80s and early 90s when cultural diversity, or internationality was an integral principle in education. Anna told me that they had international weeks and theme days, workshops of different cultures and cultural phenomena (she cited Rio's rhythms and Sambian role play) She said that the Sámi were never mentioned. Anna remembered having a slide from that period, where some Sámi and Romani were displayed in their traditional clothing, side by side with a few lines of text. The slide was part of high school teaching material, not made by Anna herself. According to Anna, the idea in the 90s was to discuss the students' own cultural backgrounds, whereas nowadays she thinks students are not treated as representatives of their own culture. In addition, when Anna talked about dealing with other cultures and ethnicities, she said that projects that dealt with, for example, othering were done then in a way that wouldn't be appropriate anymore. She told me about a photography project, where the students were tasked to empathize with another ethnicity with clothing and make up. However, Anna said that the main principles of avoiding copying and learning about cultural backgrounds have remained, even if the ways of doing so have changed with times.

I asked Anna to describe her relationship to Sámi culture. Anna started by saying that the relationship that she has with the Sámi culture is non-existent. She was very direct when she explained that the knowledge and assumptions that she has of the Sámi are superficial and based on clichés. She is also more aware of the discussion about appropriation with regard to gáktis, referring to a video art piece Grind (2011) by Jenni Hiltunen where women twerk dance in fake gáktis and the Miss World competition of 2015, where Miss Finland candidate Carola Miller wore a fake Sámi gákti. I asked Anna if she could tell me about the clichés that she thought she had absorbed, and she explained how they were connected to clothing as well. Different parts of the traditional clothing and ideas of what gáktis look like were familiar to Anna, but she explained that she didn't have a deeper understanding of the colors and symbols connected to them.

According to Anna, it is interesting to think about what defines how much one should know in order to teach something. Anna reflected on how she should get acquainted with the Sámi culture before teaching about it and that it would be beneficial to have something concrete to work with. She also emphasized that she would still prefer to have someone who would know more about the Sámi to teach about the culture onwards. Anna said it laughingly, giving me the impression that she thought that having a Sámi to teach about their own culture instead of herself was so obvious that it would be stupid to think the opposite. Even though the school is constantly being contacted from different directions, there haven't been any contacts from the Sámi. However, later during the interview Anna told me how she questions the reasons why she should acquire a lot of information about many different cultures if the knowledge would still remain superficial. She explained how she already knows one culture (referring to the African country she lived in) deeply and is interested in it. It seemed to me that it is very important for Anna to know a culture very well before teaching about it. Anna openly discussed how she wasn't sure how much one should know so that the knowledge wouldn't be superficial and therefore misleading and what the right answers to these questions were. "*It is quite ambiguous*" she said.

It is clear that Sámi culture is not discussed in her school. According to Anna, if her students have Sámi roots, it has never come up in her classroom either. In fact, the only time Anna has come across Sámi (besides the old slides) in school was in a conversation with a co-worker whose wife is Sámi and speaks Sàmi to their children. Only then, as she was telling me about her co-worker's children, did she think of the possibility of having Sámi students, not only students that might have Sámi roots, in the classroom as well.

*“They (the co-worker’s family) live here (in Helsinki) so, now that I think about it, it could be possible that we would have them (Sámi) as students too...no one has ever mentioned”* she said adding that discussing students’ cultural backgrounds demands sensitivity, maybe as an explanation of why the topic hasn’t been discussed.

A described her relationship to Sámi culture as non-existent and very distant, but after being asked if Sámi culture is mostly located in Lapland, she proved that her understanding is actually deeper than what she first claimed. In effect, she stated previously that the knowledge that she has about Sámi culture is based on clichés but later, as I understood it, the clichés were connected mostly to Sámi cultural heritage and traditional livelihood, especially in Lapland. Anna said:

“I was once in a hospital and there was another patient, next to me, and someone came to see her and I wondered what was the language they spoke, I started to listen and then I realized that it was Sámi. So there are Sámi people, among us, there are urban Sámi, and I understand they organize activities. But this cliché, of Sámi people dressed in traditional clothing and having reindeer, that is some kind of mark of exoticism and difference that is connected to northern areas. It’s stupid really, to think... like, what Sámi culture really is, besides the external features. What things are connected to the question of the language and so on, I don’t know.. What are the features related to that culture? Maybe here, in Helsinki, we have more Romani, so we know how they want to live and about their habits, like respecting the elderly.”

We moved the discussion to the direction of art education. I started by asking Anna what things she connected to Sámi art. Anna didn’t recall a lot. She mentioned that the first things that came to her mind were decorative ornaments in utensils, handicraft and jewelry. Yet, when I asked Anna how she thought Sámi art could be included in art lessons, she said that contemporary art would be a better way to open the discussion about the different layers, meanings and artists’ backgrounds behind the art pieces. Having just one culture as a topic in a lesson is unconventional and Anna would preferably avoid that kind of approach. However, besides approaching the Sámi in the context of contemporary art, she said that instead of the Sámi being the only subject of an art lesson, the subject could be approached from a wider perspective, like minorities in Finland, where the students

could research for example Sámi, Romani, Somali and Russian cultures. Anna emphasized that the students would need to research the cultures more in depth, even if they include clothing or other visual elements that are also connected to cultural stereotypes. Anna is mindful of the importance of teaching about cultures, ethnicities and histories in ways that avoid compartmentalizing and othering. I got the impression that Anna is passionate about this matter and has thought about it from many different perspectives throughout her university studies and teaching career.

I asked Anna, what she thought is the most challenging aspect in cultural appropriation, to which she replied that perhaps the most problematic thing in visual arts education is to recognize the line between getting inspiration from another culture and cultural appropriation. On the other hand, she also questioned whether those who are outsiders have the right to define what is cultural appropriation and what is not.

“Last week, Laura Huhtasaari was dragged into a TV program to talk about cultural appropriation. She said that this is a short of all white panel, are we the people.. just like, am I the right person now to say what is cultural appropriation? That hey, we should ask those who feel something is cultural appropriation. We can’t say that this isn’t a big deal, we’re just borrowing a little.”

Questions of cultural appropriation and othering have become familiar to Anna through her personal life as well. Anna is married to an African person and often talks with her child about issues related to blackness, cultural appropriation and sensitivity. Anna’s daughter has lived in England for many years and when she recently moved back to Finland, she was shocked about many things, for example, the cultural insensitivity in the media. Anna told me about an incidence in the reality show *Tanssii tähtien kanssa*, where a white person, who had lived in East Africa, performed a memorial dance in a way that was culturally abusive and filled with stereotypes. The dance made Anna’s daughter extremely upset and made her contact MTV3 with a letter where she explained how ignorant and racist the dance was.

“They replied back to her, but they didn’t admit that there was anything odd or special about it. My daughter even pointed out that *Tanssii tähtien kanssa* is based on a British format (Dances with stars) and that this kind of thing would never have been allowed in the United Kingdom.”

Anna thinks that white Finns, have not had to think about the problem of cultural appropriation. Ignoring the problem and neglecting it is rooted in the fact that we have never been subject to cultural appropriation. “we can be like, come on, this is not so serious”, she said.

Anna and her daughter have talked about cases such as hair braiding, big earrings and celebrities having make up that aims for a darker skin color. Some things, like make up for a darker skin, are easy to recognize as inappropriate, Anna said, but sometimes she feels confused about what is ok and what isn't. At the same time, students seem to be borrowing elements freely from different cultures, as Anna states and I got the impression that this makes thinking about it even harder. However, when I focused on the difficulties concerning cultural appropriation and asked her if it is about the fear of hurting someone or acting wrong. Anna agreed and said that she's genuinely concerned about the matter and aims to be as sensitive and aware as possible.

The discussion had already flown to a more political direction so, I asked her about her views on colonialism in Finland. She asked me if I meant the colonization of the Sámi and as I agree, she told me that she didn't have a clear picture of the world's history and of the situation with the Sámi people before Finland's independence. However, she referred insightfully to how the process of forming national borders in Nordic countries had been similar to the same process in Africa.

“It is kind of like in Africa, where the borders have been drawn without caring about the ethnic or cultural borders, the same language may be talked on the both sides of the (new) borders and the borders look like they are drawn with a ruler.”

Anna said she remembers being terrified after realizing that while she was travelling in Africa, she came across a castle, made by Swedes. She reflected on how we usually think that colonial states were the British, the Dutch and so on, but colonialism was practiced by Nordic countries as well. Anna has been paying attention to how the Sámi people have been raising their voices about colonialism in Finland. Like other indigenous people, Anna finds that the Sámi too are not respected as “an ethnic minority”, and she described how they seem to be sharing the experience of “*pushed into a tight spot*”, of being marginalized. She told me about her experiences in Greenland, where she saw the collision between the

mining industry and climate change and the vanishing of traditional livelihoods of the Inuit. Greenland reminded her of Africa, where the indigenous people also suffer from alcoholism, social issues and poverty. As in Africa, urbanization seemed to be forced on the indigenous people. Compared to Inuits, in terms of education and social welfare, the Sámi seem to have it better, Anna thinks. Anna reflected on how the ability to practice traditional livelihoods might not be as central in Sámi culture, which she seems to see as more modern.

We came to the topic of the Sámi before we ended the interview. I asked Anna, if she thought that discussing the Sámi culture is necessary in Finnish schools. She thought that it is and thanked me for bringing it up. Even if she hadn't thought about the matter before, Anna sees the importance of the Sámi people's culture because they are the indigenous people in Finland. According to Anna, the national curriculum is very flexible and the responsibility for whether the Sámi are discussed or not lies on every teacher's shoulders. Anna told me how she thinks that teachers are always influencers, even if the ways they do it are subtle. She grinned and pointed at the several quotes, scattered around the classroom, some more political, some more casual, like “*be kind*”.

“Teachers are supposed to be neutral and non-political, but I don't think so. I think that a teacher is allowed to... I'm not droning a political agenda here, but school teaches people to think. I think it is important.”



## Mikko

I had arranged to meet Mikko in his school in Oulu in December. In his emails, he had said that he was not familiar with the subject but he was willing to help. When I arrived to the school yard of Mikko's school in Oulu, it was snowing and the old brightly colored building looked idyllic, covered in snow. It was five days before Christmas. With help from the school janitor I found Mikko, who greeted me warmly and made jokes with the janitor.

I felt welcome. It seemed that the school was like a second home to Mikko and he shared with me how he had been there for over 50 years. First as a student, then, for 17 years, as a teacher. Having graduated as Master of Arts in the mid 90s, he had first taught in other upper secondary schools before getting his current position as arts teacher in a high school that specializes in visual arts. Before studying at the University of Art and Design in Helsinki, he had studied to become an elementary school teacher in Oulu. However, it had been obvious from the start that he would be an art teacher instead of teaching in elementary school. The university of Oulu had been the birth place of his artistic awakening. Before enrolling at university, he had been playing semi-professionally in a band. Besides music he had been photographing his whole life, but had never really thought of it as art. After quitting the band and starting his studies, he joined a photography club and learned that the hobby he had been passionate about had actually been art the whole time.

*"Through this new identity as a teacher I learned that, in a way, the thing that I had always done is art to me and now I have had 100 exhibitions and I have my own studio."*



You could feel the passion and emotion in the way Mikko described his love for photography and teaching.

After Mikko had talked about his background we changed the subject to the Sámi. I started by asking what kind of feelings had arisen when I first contacted him in November. Mikko said that he was a little bit amazed how little Sámi culture is visible in school life. He continued by explaining that his high school has a reputation for being an international school with high scores and the possibility to study in an international program or specialize in art, which attracts students from all over Northern Finland and Lapland to apply. Mikko told me how it had surprised him that sometimes Sáminess has become visible in graduation ceremonies, where students who have not shared any information about their culture in the class are then dressed in traditional Sámi gáktis. The reason why he hadn't come across Sámi culture could also be that, according to Mikko, the Sámi students might have been studying in the international high school program, where visual art is not a mandatory subject. Besides that, he didn't remember encountering Sámi culture in any way during his teaching career.

Mikko also brought up how he personally knows Timo Jokela, an artist who is known for his environmental art and is dean of the department of art in the University of Lapland. Even though Mikko and Timo are friends and Mikko has visited Timo's home village, Kittilä and naturally knows a lot about Timo's art, the question of the Sámi has not been talked about at all between them. According to Mikko, Sámi culture feels very distant. My proposal for the interview had led him to think about how little the topic is being talked about, even though the Giellagas institute, the university program of Sami culture and language is in Oulu and he knows some Sámi people himself.

I asked Mikko how he would define the Sámi in Finland, to which he replied by referring to the artist Marja Helander:

”Marja Helander did this thing where she dresses in Sámi dress and takes selfies, so maybe she is also reflecting on this and her own identity. But I assume that there are probably Sámi everywhere in Finland and in the world, I doubt if their youngsters want to earn their living by reindeer herding. They are just like everyone else.”

The situation with the Sámi in Finland is similar to that of other minorities, according to Mikko. He said it is essential to stand up for one's culture for it to survive and remembers the Sámi's independence movement in the 80s. *“Someone probably still holds on to that idea”* he m wondered. Later, when we talked more about the similarities between the Sámi and other indigenous people, Mikko recalled that at least one thing that they have in common is that the dominant people have taken over their lands. He didn't cite any other similarities, however. The idea of colonialism in Finland turned into a discussion about racism in Finland. Mikko told me how the teachers in the international program are all immigrants and have regular meetings where they talk about the racism that they face in everyday life. The group is called *“Mamu”*. He said that the idea of racism in Oulu felt absurd and unrelatable for him, yet he didn't think that only external features would determine who is exposed to racism.

“This Canadian man, who has lived here for over 30 years said to me that the situation is constantly awful, every day. He looks like a Finn and obviously speaks Finnish, but with a little accent. People are like

- aaa, you're a Swedish speaker
- no, I'm an immigrant
- you can't be...

So I can understand that when these academic people feel like subjects of racism, I can imagine that a Sámi can feel like that as well”

During the interview, Mikko brought up the multicultural nature of the school many times. In addition to the students from the international program, they regularly have exchange students from all over the world. He also mentioned that they have several asylum seekers and immigrant as students. Mikko seems to be very aware of the sensitivity when it comes to talking about the students' personal experiences and cultures. He pointed out that especially students that are immigrants have a great need to share their story and it seemed to me that Mikko wanted to meet their needs by being there for them. According to Mikko, it should be up to the student to start discussing their cultural heritage. Instead of avoiding talking about certain subjects, he emphasized the importance of being mindful about the cultural differences by for example thinking twice before making jokes



or showing pictures of things that might offend someone in the classroom. He mentioned how graphic design had been a great tool to discuss topics like power relations in society, but still students sometimes tend to get lost in having fun, which, I think, is due to the joy of photoshopping. Mikko hadn't noticed cultural appropriation and he claimed that the students are quick to learn how to behave in a culturally sensitive way.

“This is a very multicultural building, so with the immigrants and asylum seekers, and these native English speakers in the international program, students from all over the world, and those exchange students who we have all the time... it comes naturally, that somebody from a different culture will perceive something differently than he himself. Culture is within us, it's a bigger thing than you might understand at first.”

Teachers, visitors or individuals that have a lot of information and/or experience of another culture are also considered valuable when getting to know different cultures, in Mikko's opinion. I asked Mikko if he could think of situations where the Sámi culture would be a target of appropriation. He started by telling me about a man who did his civilian service in their school. The man had lived in Tokyo for years and taught Japanese in Mikko's school for one year. He also corrected and spotted Japanese words that were written incorrectly in one student's drawings. Referring to that, Mikko said it would also be important to get a Sámi to teach them about Sáminess in school. As I understand, he also thought that it would be helpful for him to understand the proper ways and protocols in order to avoid teaching the Sámi culture incorrectly. He said:

“Well, I know very little of that culture. I remember this Sámi costume thing..... That community is so small and it is in a tight spot. One could imagine that conflicts could arise on many occasions. Someone, like this man that I talked about who was in Japan, who would really know that (Sámi) area should be present (in the classroom), before I would start to hassle and do something totally wrong.”

So it seemed that Sámi culture is not visible in that high school or in Mikko's art class. Mikko said that he was surprised by why he hadn't discussed it in class or presented any examples of Sámi art. He said he didn't have an explanation for why other ethnicities and

minorities were often brought up, but Sámi hadn't been one of them. Mikko repeated that it was astonishing how little the Sámi are visible even with his Sámi friends and the Giellagas institute in Oulu. Besides Marja Helander, Mikko didn't recall any other Sámi artists. Mikko remembered seeing movies about Sámi culture and wondered if they could be a good way to introduce the topic in class. He also remembered how he had heard in a lecture somewhere along his studies, that in the Sámi culture, pictures were made to be temporary and destroyed once they had fulfilled their purpose. When I asked what he thought would be other natural places in the curriculum to discuss the Sámi culture, he replied that environmental art and land art could be good options. Later in the interview he also mentioned that graphic design could be a good opportunity to cover the topic as well. I introduced Suohpanterror to Mikko, which was unfamiliar to him, and he seemed to get new ideas from that.

After we had talked about Suohpanterror for a moment, we shared our final thoughts about the importance of discussing the invisibility of the Sámi culture in education. Mikko reflected on how the mission of education is to open our eyes to the world and how art is a great way to understand different things in a wider context. He phrased it beautifully:

“In order for us to understand and make the right solutions in the future, we need to understand history which the indigenous people are part of. So it is obvious that these matters should be discussed. --- This one student, who was far advanced in his studies, and had done 16 art courses said: visual art is like a language. When you take these steps and learn the alphabets and you go a little bit further, it starts to open up more and more. It is so wonderful.”



Figure 3: Suohpanterrot. We Loved Finland Before It Was Called Finland.  
Retrieved March 26, 2019.  
Retrieved from: <https://hairikotvoima.fi/artikkeli/kuka-kuuntelee-saamelaisia/>

## Jenni

Meeting Jenni was special because the interview took place in my old secondary school. The walk from my childhood home to the school was like a walk down the memory lane. I had arrived in Oulu early the same morning and I was still a little bit tired when I knocked on the door of the art classroom, which was so familiar to me. Jenni was in the classroom and greeted me joyfully. She asked me if I wanted to have coffee and we went to the teachers' room together to brew some. The room was full of teachers, who had just finished doing their final reviews for the year, talking loudly, having coffee and eating gingerbread cookies around the tables. The coffee maker took its time, so we decided to go back and start the interview with the basic questions.

Jenni was born in a small town, near Oulu, but had lived in several places during her life. After high school, Jenni had studied design in central Finland and worked as a freelance costumier in theatres and circuses for a couple of years. The uncertain nature of freelance work got Jenni to rethink her career and she decided that she wanted a job that would be more permanent. Jenni's grandmother had been an art teacher and her friends and family encouraged her to follow her lead. Even though art had always been an important part of Jenni's life, she tried different study programs before settling on art education. Before the decision, she enrolled in the University of Oulu to study to become an elementary school teacher specializing in art education. Then, during her master's degree, she applied to the University of Lapland to study art education in a master's program, was accepted and graduated with both degrees. *"I studied one bachelor's degree and two master's in five years, I was super fast"* she laughed.

I asked Jenni what made her agree to be interviewed and she said that she remembered how difficult it had been to find people to interview when she was studying. She also said she, too, had thought about how little her students knew about the Sámi.

“Well, in my opinion, it is a very important topic and I have noticed that students, from seven graders to seniors in high school, don’t really know much about this subject. If I have brought something up, they may not have had any understanding of what Saminess is. Even though we are not very far South and we have a lot of Sámi in Oulu too, it (Sámi) isn’t visible in our school or in my students’ awareness. Or they may have very stereotypical ideas (of what Sámi culture is), I don’t know where those ideas come from.”

Jenni has worked as an art teacher for two years, most of the time in the same school, in both secondary school and in high school. Even though Jenni is passionate about art, she explained that she likes to keep her work separate from her free time to be able to relax after work. She prefers doing all her work at school, yet she said that it’s obvious that the thinking processes and inspiration happens outside school. In Jenni’s opinion, being aware of what is currently happening in both the art world and in Oulu is essential in her teaching. She told me how she constantly introduces current events to discuss with the students, such as what is happening in architecture in Oulu and, for example, Banksy’s latest works.

We stopped for a moment to get the coffee from the teachers’ room that was now silent. When we came back, we started discussing Jenni’s own relationship to the Sámi. She started by saying that she is an outsider to the culture, but she actually has second cousins that are Sámi on her father’s side. Her father’s cousin had married a Sámi, but the families were not very close and she told how she didn’t spend a lot of time with them. More importantly, Jenni said that her link to the Sámi culture was in fact through her Sámi friends, who she had got to know during her studies in Rovaniemi and in Oulu. Even though Jenni knew Sámi people personally and had gotten to know the culture through by herself as well, she thought that there is still so much to learn for someone who isn’t an insider of that culture.

When we talked about the Sámi in Finland, Jenni knew that Helsinki has the largest Sámi population in Finland and she was familiar with the questions regarding the definition of who can identify themselves as Sámi. She added that if she had to describe the situation

of the Sámi in Finland, she would say that people know relatively little about the culture and their customs and understand them even less. Jenni believed that it’s even possible that some Finns think that the Sámi are like any other group of people in Finland, like for example, people in eastern Finland, but among Sámi people, Sáminess can be felt as an actual nationality, separate from Finnish.

Jenni appeared to know what she was talking about and the same goes for her understanding of the Sámi visual culture. She started by explaining that traditional Sámi art appears more, for example, in the design of everyday utensils and, because of the nature of nomad life, art objects had to be transportable. Furthermore, Jenni explained how Sámi art is just like that of any other culture: in addition to traditional handicraft, there are modern Sámi artists, some might be connected to traditions, some not. She mentioned Suohpanterror as an example of a contemporary Sámi artist group. Jenni seemed frustrated, when she talked about the type of Sámi art that is presented at skiing resorts in Lapland in forms of posters and postcards. *“they have the same Ranttilas there, those specific things that bring money, I don’t know, isn’t it (Sámi art) just as diverse as this, so called other art, even though the roots are a little bit different than in Western art.”*

Jenni’s knowledge of the Sámi culture made me ask her if she had studied it during her university studies. However, Jenni told me that she didn’t remember Sámi having been discussed a lot during her university studies. She did remember an incident, when she had been scrolling through an elementary school biology book with her friends during her studies. In the book the Sámi were presented stereotypically on two pages.

“They were like in this snowy landscape, with reindeer and “some people have these kind of clothes”, those few lines that were written were super awkward. We we’re like is this all, this summary?... What if we were to present Finnishness in the same way? “

Sámi culture did not figure in her university studies, but Jenni and her friends decided to make their own excursion to Lapland with a Sámi theme. For example, they went to the Sámi cultural center Sajos, to a film festival Skábmagovat (“Reflections of endless nights” in English) that showed films made by and about indigenous people and Jenni’s friend’s mother sang yoik and told them about its history.



This lack of interest in the Sámi had been evident in the schools where Jenni had taught as well. When I asked Jenni if she had come across a discussion about the Sámi in educational materials, morning assemblies, on theme days or on additional teacher training days, she says that she didn't remember any occasion where the Sámi would have been discussed. Later, she also mentioned that she didn't think that Sámi was listed in the languages that the students spoke in her school. She wasn't aware of whether the school had Sámi students either.

The colonization of the Sámi was present during the whole interview with Jenni and came up in the very beginning of the interview. She knew the historical aspects, like the assimilation processes in the 20th century and I got the impression that she had an overall picture of the current situation with the Sámi in Finland as well. When I asked Jenni, in the beginning of the interview, to describe Sámi people in Finland, she reflected on how the Sámi were treated in Finnish schools.

“Well, assimilation, they have this one generation, who were forced not to speak in their own language or express their culture, even looking like Sámi was forbidden, what clothes you could wear and so on... So then they kind of needed to re-learn some things, because their own culture was sort of forbidden and they were taken away from their homes. When was this, like in the early 20th century, I don't know, did it take place already in the late 19th century. This kind of colonization anyway, they have that in their history.”

According to Jenni, the Sámi and other indigenous peoples of the world have a lot in common. They are all victims of colonialism, their culture and way of living is circumscribed and suppressed in many ways. Jenni added: *“I doubt things have been any less harsh in other countries than in Finland. Quite aggressive..”* she said. She also reflected on the position of the Inuits in Greenland and compared them with the Sámi. In Jenni's view, the process of decolonization may have gone further in Greenland than with the Sámi, for example, in terms of education. To her understanding, Greenland offers education and also teacher training in indigenous languages, while in Finland teacher training is always in Finnish. She also wondered if it was even possible to write a masters' thesis in Sámi in Finland. I understood that Jenni referred specifically to a master's thesis in teacher training programs, not in Giellagas Institute, where theses can be written in Sámi.

Jenni also considered the situation of indigenous peoples in the context of climate change. The fact that she brought it up, gave me an impression that she was aware of the strong connection indigenous peoples traditionally have to nature.

“... Maybe we are going in the right direction. There has been some improvement. However, climate change is changing what happens to their livelihoods. So that, even if the (indigenous) people are not harassed by regulations or actions, the climate begins to impinge on what one can do.”

It could be said that Jenni feels a certain level of responsibility concerning the topic of the Sámi in her teaching. She had made it a habit to discuss it, at least, in the context of the one compulsory art course in high school and to incorporate it to other courses as well. Jenni said that she often does counter-advertisements with high school students, and that you can find a lot of good examples of them in political Sámi art, such as Suohpanterrors posters and in performances, both in traditional Sámi regions and in Helsinki. In Jenni's opinion, Sámi art has great examples of combining art and activism. Yet, according to Jenni, students are not able to recognize what is happening in the pictures or what their value is, if these are not discussed together in depth. She also noted that counter-advertisements that are more familiar to students also opened the door to understanding questions related to the Sámi. In other words, when students learn to look at counter-advertisements through examples that are more familiar to them, they are more able to apply the thinking pattern and understand similar examples in Sámi art. “Maybe, through that discussion, they could understand better what is happening in Finland and with the Sámi too” she summarized. Including Sámi culture in the first art course in high school seemed to be important to Jenni. *“I want to offer at least that one piece of information, because all the students have to take that course. So that even if they don't talk about it on any other occasion, at least, they have this one little thought...”* she said. In addition, Jenni said that she was going to take all her classes to Outi Pieski's exhibition in the Oulu Museum of Art the following spring.

It seemed to me that Jenni is mindful of the challenges in teaching other people's cultures as an outsider. She told me how she emphasizes that we can explore or take a certain angle to look at things, but the most important thing to keep in mind is that cultures that are explored in the classroom are far more diverse than what we might think they are. She often reminds her students to keep their eyes open and having an open mind. However,

she admitted it is impossible to fill the students minds with information or to make them have a curious mind.

According to Jenni, it is essential to get to know the backgrounds, when dealing with different cultures. She avoids tasks that would copy elements directly, but admitted that she made an exception on Halloween in the form of an additional task. The task was to create a design for a ready-made sugar skull. However, Jenni emphasized that although the task was enormously popular and good discussions emerged, she rarely planned similar assignments and encouraged students to think about their own ideas and to create from scratch - not according to the teacher's model, which is very common in elementary school art classes. However, according to Jenni, the task was a borderline case where she had pondered the problem of cultural appropriation. Jenni said:

“...and even though it is a bit borderline, whether it is cultural appropriation or not, before making the design we acquainted ourselves with the subject. Now there is Halloween, what has it been in the past? It used to be all hallows eve, well what was it before that? There have been shamans. And then we learned about other things that are celebrated in Finnish culture, All Saints' day, and before that, Kekri. and then they got to know the visual world and then made their own design. It wasn't that sort of separate thing, but well, I don't know, is it still borderline? Is that bad? They like them so much.”

However, Jenni would not have planned a similar task about the Sámi, because according to her, it is too unfamiliar or “strange” for the students, while sugar skulls and Halloween are very familiar to them. Questions relating to cultural appropriation seemed to make Jenni confused at times. Jenni explained how in art, people have always been influenced by other cultures but on the other hand, the more we know about cultural appropriation, the more careful we become. Jenni figured that maybe in Finland, people are sometimes even too afraid to do anything for fear of accidentally being culturally inappropriate. However, she added that many people might not even think about these issues at all. Jenni thought that the line between respecting and getting inspiration or abusing and stealing from another culture should be clear, if we know about the culture that we are dealing with.

”Common sense is pretty good. Can I do this, should I do this? If there is a risk that someone might be offended, or...if someone takes the task to a totally discriminating direction, that is a great place to talk about why one can or cannot do something, why something is somehow bad, abusive or making people unequal”

According to Jenni, the ideal situation for teaching about Sámi culture would be to get a Sámi guest who would either have approved the content of the teaching or would take part in planning the lesson. In her opinion, it would be important to approach this subject in a pupil-oriented way, too, and to avoid ready-made materials. In her opinion, a Sámi-related video for example, could be a good part of teaching if personal assistance is not available. Jenni continued by repeating that it is essential to be aware of the cultural backgrounds and to open them to students - even if it isn't possible to cooperate with an insider of a culture. Information that remains on the surface level only leads to strengthening stereotypes, Jenni believed.

The school where Jenni teaches, is very multicultural due to the possibility of studying Finnish as a second language there as well as having classes that prepare immigrant children for basic education. According to Jenni, there are over 40 languages spoken in the school. It seemed that the huge variety of different cultural and social backgrounds was visible in the art class especially when dealing with the students' own cultures. Jenni told me how, especially immigrants that hadn't been living in Finland for long, had a great need to express and explore their identity in a new country and simultaneously cherish their own cultural background. Art education, despite being Western, offers ways to discuss questions related to identity and culture, Jenni said. Teaching about the Sámi might be especially challenging for the immigrant students to understand, because at the same time they are adapting to Finnish culture, Jenni said. However, she thought that teaching about the Sámi is also valuable, because it can offer a gateway to understanding that we have different ethnicities in Finland too and there have been people before the Finns as well. In that way, immigrants can also identify to questions relating to Sámi, she reflected. Furthermore, she noted that the multicultural nature of the school seems to offer a setting where there are no strict binary distinctions between the Sámi and the Finns, instead there were multiple cultural identities, which could lead to a more equal setting to explore the subject of the Sámi.

However, the questions of one's own background and identity were obviously not just something that the immigrants needed to discuss. Jenni told me several examples of discussions that raised from pupils' own image cultures through various symbols and elements. Sometimes pupils deliberately brought things to lessons, but oftentimes students' backgrounds manifest themselves through the work (in the form of logos, cultural and social symbols etc.) perhaps subconsciously. However, Sámi culture hadn't come up in the context of students' own visual cultures. Jenni also added that social media has a massive role in students' lives and what kind of visual culture they are exposed to. She aims to offer knowledge about visual culture, beyond social media.

If Sámi culture hadn't been discussed in the context of the students' own visual cultures, what could be natural places to discuss Sámi culture in the national curriculum, I asked her. In Jenni's opinion, the national curriculum is very flexible and, depending on one's view point, there are multiple options to discuss it. *"For example exhibitions are a great way to talk about it, not only about the socio-political situation, but also about the history and what is the canon behind"*, she said.

Jenni also thought about the possibilities of combining textile work and visual art as an option to explore Sámi culture.

Before we finished the interview, I asked Jenni if she would like to add something. Even though my impression of Jenni's knowledge about the Sámi culture was that she actually knows quite a lot about the subject, she said that, in fact, the interview reminded her of how much more she could do. She wondered about the difficulty of teaching about a culture as an outsider and said that one should expose oneself to another culture to be able to teach about it.

"This is a great topic that should be discussed more in the context of education.. I don't have much to say about this, because I feel like I know so little about this, even though I do know something."



Figure 4: Laakso, M. (2010). Kahvi-tauko / Coffee break.  
Retrieved March 26, 2019. Retrieved from: <http://www.markkulaakso.com/index.php/woks>

## Pekka

I met Pekka in the art class of his school in Helsinki, after he had finished for the day. He was putting away his pupils' paintings and explained what they had been doing. You could hear the excitement in his voice, it was clear that he is genuinely passionate about his work and interested in every pupil's individual way of perceiving and painting. While he was cleaning up the classroom he told me that he had not prepared for the interview. I told him that it was fine and that I was just interested in hearing what he had to say about the subject. While Pekka was cleaning and messaging with his family before we started, I made everything ready for the interview. The atmosphere was relaxed. I had planned to ask the questions that have different themes in their order but to ask more detailed questions and other questions that would arise naturally in the interview.

We started by talking about his personal history and career. Pekka is originally from a smaller city in Southern Finland, but he has lived most of his life in Helsinki after moving there to study art education in the University of Art and Design. Besides living in Helsinki, he has lived for short periods abroad, in Europe and in Latin America. Pekka has been teaching for almost twenty years now. Most of the time in elementary and high schools but also in art museums, cultural centers and community colleges. His work is very important to him, in fact, he stated laughingly that it takes up half of his waking hours. I got the impression that art is not only a subject that he teaches but present in every aspect of his life.

After talking about Pekka's past we dived into the subject of the Sámi. When I first contacted Pekka for the interview, he told me that he was probably not the right person to interview because he hadn't really taught Sámi art. I asked him what eventually made him

change his mind and said he wanted to help. Pekka said he felt perplexed after realizing that he hadn't touched on the topic of the Sámi during his teaching career. When I asked him for details, he said it wasn't really that bringing up the topic itself would have felt difficult, but the realization of not having discussed the Sámi had been perplexing.

I asked Pekka how he would describe his relationship to the Sámi. Pekka started by telling me about his background and experiences about travelling in Finland. He said he hadn't really been to Lapland. The northernmost locations he had been were Kuusamo and Rovaniemi. *"It is very distant" he said and continued "I'm from southern Finland, I have no connections to Lapland through friends or family"*. He explains how he hadn't had a natural link to Lapland and even though he felt the Sámi culture as part of his own culture in Finland, it still felt very distant.

Pekka is very honest regarding how little he knows about the Sámi culture. When I asked him about his knowledge of the Sámi culture, he described it as *"very poor"*. Pekka defined them as a minority with their own language and admitted that he didn't know about their history or their current situation in Finland. He mentioned specifically that he didn't have a clear picture whether the Sámi have schools or services in their own language. Pekka didn't remember any occasion during his work history of coming across a discussion about the Sámi. When we discussed the images which came mind from the visual culture of the Sámi, he noted how the first things that came to his mind were the bright colors and the Sámi drums. He continued the sentence by stating how the Sámi drums are exploited by tourism and he questioned their authenticity as part of Sámi visual culture. Pekka also said he was reminded of a racist sketch in the well-known Finnish tv comedy series, *Hymyhuulet* in the 80s, in which Pirkka Pekka Petelius and Aakke Kalliola played the roles of two rowdy, drunken Sámi men. He admitted the show made him laugh but made it clear that in his opinion the humor in *Hymyhuulet* was shameful and fortunately times have changed for the better.

Sámi culture hadn't been present in Pukka's teaching in any other way than as an excursion to Annika Dahlsten and Markku Laakso's photo exhibition *Jump into Diorama* (2013). *Jump into Diorama* was a documentary photo exhibition on the topic of otherness, belonging to a place, realness and authenticity with Dahlsten and Laakso posing in Sámi dresses with people and animals in different locations, in Lapland, Germany and Africa.

The story behind the exhibition was inspired by Laakso's family history. In 1930, his father's grandparents, travelled to Germany as part of an exhibition on their livelihood and culture as Sámi in various zoos. (Dahlsten & Laako, retrieved, 2019). Before the visit to the exhibition, Pekka had contacted the artists to ask if they could come and talk about the exhibition to his class. Dahlsten and Laakso, who lived in Turku, were unfortunately unable to collaborate. Pekka had also used Markku Aalto's paintings, especially the famous paintings where Elvis, in a golden jacket, travels in typically Finnish national landscapes with a girl dressed in traditional Sámi dress. However, Pekka pointed out that the topics that were discussed both in the exhibition and in Laakso's paintings, were, not about the Sámi culture, but questions of place, belonging and authenticity from other perspectives. The ethnicity of the Sámi girl in Laakso's paintings seemed to have been overlooked in Pekka's class and, instead, the paintings had been looked at from the perspectives of Finnishness, belonging to a place and popular culture.

In Pekka's opinion it is important to emphasize the importance of being aware of the dominant, western ways of looking at and interpreting visual culture and art. He had taught a course entirely focused on non-European art in a high school where he had worked previously, in which the different cultures were studied both from a historical perspective and through modern art. Pekka stated that he finds it essential to widen the students' ways of seeing visual culture by studying different hierarchies, tensions and power relations within the pictures.

"The different impact that pictures can have, how they have been received and, in general, who the people in the pictures are. Whether pictures are made of ordinary people or noblemen .. If we talk about all visual culture, then yes, I think it is interesting to detail why pictures are formed like that. Why Bollywood is what it is, what it aims for, what its goals are and why it is so popular? Whether it is a commercial image or made for entertainment, in my opinion, it is essential to ask why the picture was made and what it aims to do."

I got the impression that Pekka's goal is to teach, not only the different aspects that form a picture but also to recognize one's own position and how that affects how one should and can act in the processes of looking at and creating pictures.

"First of all, both yourself and the students need to be reminded of how to read pictures. Can an image be read from our western aesthetic point of view, or is it connected to a religion, a ritual, whether we can separate these from each other or bring elements into our own use. Yes it is related to the so-called white man's burden, that you should be aware of how to behave and act and what you can do."

Later, when I asked specifically about the appropriation of Sámi art he said that he thought the same principles are valid whether you deal with Sámi or, for example, Islamic art: *"you need to know who you are and where you come from and respect different cultures. It is about behavior"*.

Besides exploring and challenging our own western ways of looking at the world, Pekka aims to collaborate with different artists when it is possible. He talked about visits to exhibitions where artists had been there to speak about their work, intentions and backgrounds. In Pekka's view, collaboration with artists is a great way to learn about differences and similarities in how we look at and interpret pictures.

We continued by discussing what might be convenient places to address the Sámi in national and school-specific curricula. The conversation flowed back to the theme of multicultural education and its importance. He stated that the cultural environment in the school is described as pluralistic and multicultural overall in the curriculum, not just in the context of visual arts and continued by saying that it is essential to know one's own culture. Pekka argued that the idea of multiculturalism might have been beneficial to our attitude toward the Romani culture in Finland. As I understood, Pekka thinks that Sámi culture is a part of Finnish culture and therefore it should be valued like any other culture in Finland. In his opinion, however, it would be peculiar if the national curriculum detailed certain cultures that should be discussed in schools. *"Why not Swedish speaking Finns or people from Savo"* he wondered and continued: *"... If a fifth-grader gave a presentation on the Sámi, how much would it rely on clichés? Would it actually offer that much diversity?"*.

It is clear that Pekka thinks that it is important that the Sámi culture and heritage are discussed in Finnish schools, not just Sámi schools. However his choice of words *"schools in that area, other than Sámi schools"* gave me the impression that Pekka referred to Northern



Finland and Sámi home regions. When I later asked Pekka if he was aware of ever having Sámi students and he replied that he wasn't. We agreed that it would be a great way to discuss Sámi culture, if the topic would have risen naturally in the classroom.

According to Pekka, contemporary art is a great way to discuss any current phenomena and that pictures can be great tools to discuss different power relations, tensions and hierarchies. When I asked Pekka to specify what would be interesting angles from which Sámi art could be looked at in the context of art education, he said that the Sámi could be discussed naturally in many contexts, for example, through different art pieces, with themes like identity, nationality, Finnish history and relationship to place. In order to avoid appropriation or a superficial approach, one should know the meanings behind, for example, the colors and patterns in Sámi visual culture, he stated. Yet, Pekka argued that the students' own visual cultures should have the biggest role in the art class and that's why Sámi art, as well, should be approached through perspectives that are relatable to them.

My last question to Pekka was about colonialism in Finland. The question brought up memories to Pekka's mind about his trip to southern France, where he took a painting course with other Finnish art educators. The course had been culturally diverse, but most of the people were from England, Canada and especially from the United States. When he was asked where else people spoke Finnish other than Finland, he realized how he had never been able to speak his own language while travelling – which was the opposite for the native English speakers in the group, who could go anywhere in the world and expect people to speak English. He mentioned Finland's special nature of being a country without any colonies and tells me how he had recently read an article about foreign companies mining in Finland, exploiting our low mining taxes. Pekka continued by speculating about the Finnish policy in the 50s and 60s to unify the nation and represent it as homogenous in the media, even though Finland consists of various cultures that have different habits and dialects. As he had admitted, he didn't know much about the history or current situation of the Sámi but he thought the situation wasn't as bad as it is, for example in Latin America and their indigenous people. Pekka said:

I don't know the history of Sami, what the situation was for example a hundred years ago or what the Sámi question was during the World War II. For a long time it was thought that Finland was playing fair, but then it turned out that Finns deported people to Germany, too. So we're not that pure after all. If you say everything is fine, the table is clean, it usually means that there is something beneath the surface.

We continued discussing the indigenous people in Latin America and the idea of nationalism in the 19th century. In Pekka's opinion the most important thing is that indigenous cultures are protected, that they can develop and that their culture is recorded. The desire for authenticity and the clichés that surround the ideas of authenticity are something that Pekka is critical of. Pekka has personal experiences of living in areas where indigenous people have been trying to maintain their culture in Latin America. His time and experiences when living abroad has made him wonder how we, too, as a nation of 5 million people are a minority in the world, even if we are in a dominant position as Finns in Finland. When we talked about different indigenous people in the world, Pekka said they could learn from each other because of the similarities in indigenous peoples' problems but he also reflected on how they could learn from Finland, which grew into welfare state from a very poor small country.

Before we finished the interview, we returned briefly to the topic of the Sámi in Finnish educational system and discussed the possibilities of having it included in art education. Pekka remembered a couple of artists more that he connected to the Sámi culture, one of which was Timo Jokela, the environmental artist and dean of the department of art education in the University of Lapland (also mentioned in Mikko's interview) and Jorma Puranen, a photographer whose series of photos *Kadotettu kansa* (lost nation) deals with Sámi cultural heritage. Pekka remembered especially Jokela's snow and ice statues and how Jokela's art comments on the relationship between people, nature and place. He assumed that elements in Jokela's snow statues are connected to indigenous people's culture, but wasn't sure about it. He seemed excited to find connections between the color wheels he had painted in snow with the students earlier that week and Jokela's work and said, cheerfully *"hey, now my own teaching is starting to develop!"* He continued by saying:

”we could have continued this somehow, like, I could have told them about Timo Jokela and we could have developed and talked more broadly about environmental art and the meaning of a place and also why Timo Jokela is doing something like this, what these are connected with”.

He continued the sentence by pointing out, as I interpret it, his recognition of the importance of the students’ own cultures *“but what are the cultures, the languages and worlds of these students that they live in?”*. Pekka illustrated the multicultural nature of today’s school world with a story about a visit to a first grade classroom with a professor from the United States. The class was almost empty and the visiting professor asked the reason behind it. The teacher explained that the lesson that took place was Finnish and over half of the students in the first grade in their school spoke some other language than Finnish as their mother tongue. Pekka said:

“cultural diversity is here.... It’s like the students’ own languages and symbols can be found very close and they are extremely diverse”

7.

## ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I will go over findings from the interviews with reference to my literature review. My aim is to answer and find clarity for my research questions. My analysis consists of three approaches to the categories that the interview questions were based on. The first subchapter will focus on the beliefs and knowledge that the interviewees had about the Sámi in general. The second subchapter will discuss how Sámi culture has been presented in the interviewees' schools and their lessons. It also aims to find reasons why Sámi culture has possibly been overlooked and how it could be included in visual arts lessons in secondary schools and high schools. The third subchapter will focus on cultural appropriation and how the interviewees saw colonialism in the Finnish context and especially as regards the Sámi.

### The teachers' views and beliefs about the Sámi

Three out of the four interviewees told me that they were not familiar with Sámi culture and hadn't included it in their teaching. Only Jenni mentioned that she had some experience of her own and that she had tried incorporating Sámi culture in her teaching. All of the teachers that I interviewed were extremely transparent about how little they knew about Sámi culture. According to Schatz (2016), the strong faith in the Finnish educational system can have an effect on why some things are not observed critically. However, all three interviewees that hadn't dealt with the Sámi in their teaching frankly admitted that they hadn't paid attention to the matter and were openly perplexed by why they had overlooked the Sámi.

Anna, Pekka and Mikko described their relationship to Sámi culture distant or non-existent. Jenni, on the other hand, described herself as an outsider and expressed the idea that, even though she knew Sámi culture on some level, there was still a lot to learn. Even though I wasn't aware of the interviewees' backgrounds beforehand, the division between the teachers that had lived in southern Finland most of their lives and those that were from northern Finland became clear. Anna and Pekka referred to Sáminess as something that can be located to the North more than Jenni and Mikko. In addition, Jenni and Mikko personally knew Sámi people and stated that Sámi are similar to all other ethnicities in Finland who live outside the Sámi homelands. In Mikko's view, in spite of the Giellagas Institute being located in Oulu, Sámi culture is barely visible in the city. Jenni shared Mikko's opinion and said that even though the Sámi population in Oulu is not negligible, it is not visible in schools and the students' knowledge about the Sámi is minimal and based on stereotypes. Anna had also come across Sámi people in Helsinki and was aware of the active City Sámi organization. She also admitted that even though the Sámi are connected to the North in her mind, this view is not accurate but originated from stereotypes about the Sámi. Pekka, on the other hand, didn't mention ever having come across Sámi people or Sámi culture in his personal life and some of his references gave me the idea that he places the Sámi mostly in Lapland.

Only Anna described Sámi as a nation that lives in the area of four independent states Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Anna compared Sámi to African indigenous peoples

by referring to effects that nation borders have had in the formation of national states and explained that the national borders were formed without respecting the different cultures and languages in the area. Sámi cultures' multiple languages, histories and habits were not discussed in the interviews. Lehtola (2015) states that understanding the diversity of Sámi culture is essential for avoiding cultural misinterpretation and misuse.

Three of the four teachers admitted that they didn't have an understanding about the historical aspects of the Sámi in Finland. Yet two of the four mentioned specifically that they didn't know what the situation with the Sámi was during the Second World War, which gave me the impression that they had some ideas about the connection between the Sámi and the solidification of national borders in Nordic countries. According to Henrikson (2008) and Lehtola (2015) the solidification of national borders affected both Sámi culture and lifestyle. Jenni was the only interviewee that was aware of the assimilation processes in Finland and how it had affected Sámi culture on social, cultural and individual levels. The others told me that, according to their understanding, the Sámi have been "*in a tight spot*" in Finland.

All of the interviewees described the Sámi as indigenous people at some point during the interview but two of the four first referred to them as a minority with their own language and culture in Finland. According to Kuokkanen (2007) referring to the Sámi as a minority is commonplace in Finland. However, the term ethnic minority fails to describe the Sámi people's strong historical connection to the land, which sets them apart from other ethnic minorities in Finland, such as the Roma people and Somalis. The strong connection to the land can be seen not only in cultural traditions, but in the fact that the Sámi were the first inhabitants in the geographical area of present-day Finland.

In the interviews, most of the teachers were of the opinion that the Sámi are special because they are, in fact, our own indigenous people and that is one of the reasons that they should be discussed. Admittedly, it may be due to the form of the interview question that the Sámi came to be viewed in the context of other indigenous people. However, one teacher pointed out that, in her view, it might be thought that the Sámi are no different from any other group in Finland, such as people from Oulu. Another teacher was of the same opinion and thought that discussing specific groups of people in Finland wouldn't feel natural or useful. In my view, these notions created a contradiction: on the one hand,

the Sámi were seen as special because they are our own indigenous culture and therefore should be discussed. On the other hand, the idea of highlighting and focusing on specific cultures in art education was seen as something to be avoided. In my view, these notions reflect Oikarinen-Jabai's (2014) and Kallio-Tavin's (2015) observation of the discomfort in discussing ethnic differences and race, since that may be seen as negative and labeling. I think that it may also explain why Pekka had passed over Sámi as an ethnicity in Annika Dahlsten and Markku Laakso's photo exhibition *Jump into Diarama*.

Could it be that being neutral is something that is rooted in the Finnish notion of everyone being treated equally? The problem with the idea of equality is, however, that if everyone is treated equally, i.e. in the same way, it means not making allowances for differences. What I mean by this is that, equality is always based on someone's ideas of equality. For example, Finnish educational system is grounded on the students' mother tongue and culture, however, this does not apply to Sámi students. Likewise, if sexual minorities or people with disabilities are not treated as special, since everyone should be treated equally, there will be no equality. This is why equity is a more useful concept: unlike equality, which is based on the idea that everyone should be treated in the same way, equity is based on the idea that everyone should have the same outcome, but in ways which vary between different people. Therefore, in my view, in this specific context, Sámi culture needs to get that special attention in Finland.

Besides the shared recognition of the Sámi's position in the marginal in Finland, their current situation didn't raise a lot of discussion. Jenni mentioned the demonstrations against the Arctic Ocean railway project and how climate change has an effect on indigenous people in the arctic areas. She also wondered whether the Finnish matriculation examination could be taken using solely the Sámi language, which according to The Institute for the Languages in Finland is only possible for the Sámi mother tongue or Sámi as a foreign language exam. Pekka wondered about the use of Sámi languages in government offices and in schools, but admitted that he didn't know enough about of the current situation. On the other hand, Jenni mentioned how the Sámi didn't have their own teacher training in Sámi, which was the only connection to the arguments made by Kuokkanen (2007) about the ignorance of Sámi's culture and worldviews in education in Finland. Mikko recalled the Sámi independence movement in the 80s but I got the impression that he didn't know whether the Sámi wanted to be independent nowadays or not.

The images that some of them first connected to Sámi visual culture were bright colors,

Sámi drums, utensils, Sámi dresses and jewelry. They also mentioned ornaments and symbols and their lack of knowledge behind the possible meanings behind them. Yet all of the interviewees could name Sámi contemporary artists and were familiar with their work. Their views were in line with the literary review where I opened the discussion on how Sámi people do not generally support the idea of confrontation between traditional and non-traditional. Even though Hansen (2016) suggested that traditional duodji is seen as a “authentic” Sámi art where modern art, dáidda, has been seen as non-Sámi, it was obvious that the teachers’ ideas of what Sámi visual culture is was more complex and realistic. They all seemed to think that Sámi art is just like any other form of art, but one was able to detail aspects about duodjis’ original functions and the hybrid nature of Sámi art today with traditional elements sometimes mixed with new medias. In addition, one criticized peoples’ yearning for authenticity in general.

In summary, most of the interviewees pointed out that some of their ideas about Sámi were partly based on false imagery that they assumed to be stereotypical representation of the culture. It was clear that they all knew that the stereotypical images that they had about the Sámi didn’t correspond to reality. They also shared the idea that Sámi is a diverse culture.

In the next section I will take a deeper look on whether the Sámi were discussed in the schools of the interviewees and what might have affected that. I will bring up topics of appropriation in school context and what kinds of possibilities teachers saw in Sámi art in the art education.

## Sámi culture in the interviewees’ schools

As stated in the beginning, the hypothesis for my thesis was that the Sámi are not discussed in most schools. Only one of the four teachers had included Sámi culture in their lessons. In addition, none of the teachers had ever come across Sámi culture in school life in the form of theme days, additional teacher training days, morning assemblies etc.

Kuokkanen’s (2007) argument about the stereotypical, ethnographic and minimal descriptions about the Sámi in Finnish school books was also in line with the interviewees’ experiences. Anna and Jenni remembered teaching material that fit Kuokkanen’s description. Interestingly the material Anna remembered was at least twenty years old but Jenni’s encounter with similar material in modern school books was from the time she was studying at university, a little over two years ago. Even though Kuokkanen argues that the Sámi were not discussed sufficiently in the Finnish national curriculum, the same thing could be said about any culture in the context of visual art, because the national curriculum does not name any specific culture that should be discussed. In fact, what sets the Sámi apart from other cultures is that the Sámi are the only ethnic group specifically mentioned in the general introduction to the national curriculum for comprehensive schools. The subchapter Cultural diversity and language awareness in the national curriculum states that:

The (school) community values and makes use of Finland’s cultural heritage and national languages, as well as its cultural, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity. It highlights the importance of Sámi culture and various minorities in Finland.

The special position of Sámi culture being thus recognized in the national curriculum means that it should be part of education including art education. According to Mira Kallio-Tavin (2015) teachers in Finland show an interest in what the national curriculum says and the findings in the interviews supported this in the context of art education. However, three teachers who taught in comprehensive school didn’t mention knowing the national curriculum highlighted the Sámi in that way.

Besides the lack of information about the Sámi in their own teacher training and in school life, I noticed *six possible implications* based on the interviews, to why the Sámi were not discussed in three of the four schools.

*Firstly*, the interviewed teachers emphasized student-centered teaching methods and the pupils' own visual cultures, which are also prominent in the national curriculum. None of the teachers recalled being aware of having Sámi students. However, Mikko mentioned that they had Sámi students in their school, but he hadn't been aware that they had been Sámi until it became in the graduation ceremony, where they had worn traditional gaktis. Based on the interview, I got the impression that Mikko's experience was not based on one occasion, but the school had had multiple Sámi students over the years.

Overall, the teachers were in line with the guidelines on how to discuss students' own cultures in school, which stipulated that teachers should never serve as initiators or treat students as representatives of their ethnicity. According to Kuokkanen (2007) the ignorance of the Sámi in education weakens the Sámi pupils' identity and their knowledge of their own culture. However, this could be said about all students who identify with cultures other than Finnish.

*Secondly*, in addition to the belief in the equality between cultures, another thing that came up in the interviews was the teachers' personal interests, which determined what themes were selected for the lessons.

In my theoretical framework I explored some of the inadequacies of the Finnish educational system that are related to questions concerning the Sámi. For example, Schatz (2016) noted that the teachers' freedom is considered both as a positive and a negative. Interviews done for this thesis supported the fact that the freedom to choose what to discuss provided one simple explanation for why the Sámi were not discussed in three of the four schools and also why it was discussed in one. The freedom that the Finnish national curriculum offers for art education is definitely a positive thing, but it also leaves a lot of things on individual teachers' shoulders.

*The third implication* was that all of the teachers talked a lot about the multicultural nature of their schools and that seemed to guide their teaching so that they would focus on cultures that were more visible in the school or naturally came up in the lessons. As Peter Kariuki stated (Vuorela, 2014), the recent wave of migration into Nordic countries pushed Finland to adapt new ways to live like a transnationally connected country. Kallio-Tavin (2015) also noted that Finland was a relatively mono-cultural society until the late 20th century and that made its ethnic cultural diversity in education slow, compared to other Western societies. These notions were visible in the ways the teachers seemed to think about cultural diversity in their schools. To my understanding the ways cultural diversity was discussed in the schools in general might also have created divisions between "us", the Finnish so-called rooted Finns and all the other cultures at times. The other minorities (such as Sámi, Romani or Ingrian Finns) didn't seem to fit in either category and I wonder if they were overlooked because of the need for multicultural education that focused on ethnic minorities, whose histories in Finland were shorter.

*The fourth implication* is also related to the discussions of multicultural education. Teachers thought that encountering the other, exploring power relations in the world, and learning to take a critical view on the world can be achieved through various universal examples. In other words, discussing indigenous people in Africa could help the students to understand the Sámi people as well.

Personally, I agree that the choices regarding what to discuss in the visual art lessons are endless and we can learn about cultural phenomena without covering all the cultures in the world. Yet, the teachers recognized the special character of the Sámi as the indigenous people of Finland and expressed how perplexing it was that they had bypassed it. Obviously, exploring other indigenous cultures could also open more understanding for the Sámi culture, but the problem with this argument is that if the Sámi are barely seen in education, society or the media, will students pay attention to them? After all, Sámi are the only indigenous people in Finland and in the European Union.

However, one teacher also pointed out Sámi culture can be a gateway for understanding other cultures, and it also reduces the dichotomy between rooted Finns and others. I found Jenni's thoughts useful and I also want to add that discussing Sámi people can open great perspectives on a discussion on what constitutes Finnishness or so-called *rooted Finns*.

*The fifth implication* was also approached in the previous subchapter: all the interviewed teachers thought that in order to teach about another culture, teachers need to have a deep understanding about that culture and its history. Jenni was clearly familiar with Sámi culture, therefore bringing it into teaching was natural and easy. Others, however, felt that Sámi culture was quite distant and unfamiliar, and that might be one reason why they hadn't considered bringing up the Sámi in their lessons. Especially Anna and Mikko expressed their concern about doing more harm than good. None of the teachers had tried to contact any Sámi individuals to talk about their culture, yet Pekka had contacted Annika Dahlsten and Markku Laakso to talk about their exhibition Jump into Diarama, even though Sámi culture hadn't been the focus on his own teaching based on the exhibition. Pekka and Anna also argued that if they were to teach Sámi art, they should really deepen their understanding of it to avoid strengthening stereotypes related to Sámi. They expressed their concern that they might teach it incorrectly and preferred the possibility of having a Sámi to teach about their culture. Perhaps since the Sámi are part of Finnish society and history, teaching about them as an outsider might be felt especially sensitive.

*The sixth implication* is present in the previous ones, too, but I want to highlight something that was repeated throughout the interviews, which was the overwhelming variety of content that needs to be addressed in visual arts lessons nowadays. It seemed also that cultural change, the new medias and art teachers' other responsibilities may have contributed to why three teachers hadn't discussed Sámi culture in their lessons. Two teachers described everyday life at school as hectic, one of them adding that teachers' tasks had greatly expanded outside the teaching of their own subject in recent years. However, even if the nature of teachers' work might be busy with a lot of things to get through, why some techniques or themes are being discussed depends on the teacher. Many of the teachers mentioned that the national curriculum gives teachers a lot of freedom, which, according to Schatz (2016), was also a key element in Finland's educational success. Even though this autonomy is, in my view, definitely a good thing, it could also explain why some things, like the Sámi culture, are not discussed in schools.

Lastly, I will summarize the ways which the interviewees suggested for dealing with Sámi culture in the context of art education. First of all, I want to emphasize that the interview itself was considered as a positive thing by the interviewees and they all told me it had

developed their thinking and made them more aware of the position of the Sámi in education. They were all interested in Sámi culture and they didn't seem to have any negative attitudes towards it. Even though three of them hadn't included Sámi culture in their teaching, they all said that they realized that it is important to discuss Sámi culture because, after all, they are the indigenous people of Finland. Among the ways to include Sámi art in art lessons they listed contemporary art, political art, environmental/land art, questions of belonging to place and identity, Finnish history and graphic design. According to Rauna Kuokkanen (2007) Veli-Pekka Lehtola (2015) Helena Oikarinen-Jabai (2014) and Laurie A. Eldridge (2016) stereotypical imagery in education perpetuates the primitivism, racism and exoticism associated with Sámi culture. However, the interviews show that it is unlikely that the teachers I interviewed would teach Sámi visual culture in a way that would reinforce this image.

## Teachers' notions on colonialism in Finland, cultural diversity and cultural appropriation

In the previous sub-chapter I began discussing how the interviewees saw the Sámi's position in Finland. Based on the interviews, my conclusion was that most of the teachers were barely aware of the Finnish colonization of the Sámi. I understood that only one had a clear picture of the different ways in which the Sámi have been actively colonized in Finland. Another teacher was aware that Sámi people had been colonized in some ways but didn't cite any specific acts beyond questions relating to land ownership and language, which seemed to be recognized by all the four teachers. Two of the four teachers seemed to think that the situation with the Sámi was not as bad as it is with other indigenous people, like Native Americans or indigenous peoples in Australia. In addition, one was aware that the Sámi's decolonization process has been relatively slow in the field of education compared with that of some other indigenous people.

All of these statements reflect the reality of colonialism in Finland in different ways. According to Kuokkanen (2007) Sámi people don't have as many social problems such as poverty, homelessness, unemployment or lack of health services as some other indigenous people in first world countries, such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand or the U.S. However, the reason is not that Finland has treated its indigenous people better than other countries. According to Kuokkanen, the process of assimilation has been so successful that the disadvantages of integration into a modern welfare state (such as the loss of the Sámi's own worldview, language and culture) have gone unnoticed even by the Sámi themselves.

One of the interview questions was about Finland's position as a colonial country, and I encouraged teachers to share what kinds of thoughts might rise from that statement. The ways in which the teacher interpreted the question varied. One teacher took the discussion into the direction of Finland as a minority in the world and a target of colonial actions themselves, which is a common idea of Finland's relationship to colonialism. Another teacher replied to the same question by sharing his views on racism towards white immigrants in Finland and how that had made him think about the Sámi as a target of racism. Both examples were connected to themes discussed in the chapter Nordic

colonialism and recognizing whiteness. The first indicated that the belief in Finnish innocence was present in the collected data as well. Finland's struggle as a small nation, which gained its independence quite recently, and its relatively small population were cited. Finland was also mentioned by the same interviewee as a target of global mining projects today and Swedish missionary activity in the Middle Ages (Mulinari et.al, 2009). The interviewees also pointed out that even though Finland was seen as innocent and pure, that was probably not as true as we would like to think. This statement was shared by most of the interviewees.

The second example was about racism in Finland, as it was discussed in Mikko's narrative. Mikko explained how he had been surprised that racism existed even among his co-workers and he told me how he had heard that Finland might be the most racist country in the world. He said that racism in Finland, especially among educated white people was hard for him to understand. Based on his co-workers' experiences, he said that he could imagine that the Sámi could be targets of racism, too. Moreover, his use of words "*He looks like a Finn*" also showed how automatic the description of Finnish whiteness is. (see Oikarinen-Jabai, 2014) This made me think that one possible explanation why the Sámi are not commonly seen as targets of colonialism and racism could be that they don't look very different from the so-called rooted Finns and it may be that racism is still commonly seen as something that occurs when the individual looks significantly different from a "*typical*" white Finn. The discussion about whiteness on that level, however, bypasses the power structures of a certain type of Western whiteness and, in addition, leaves out the cruel history of Sámi racialization.

Overall, Oikarinen-Jabai's (2014) and Kallio-Tavin & Tavin's (2018) views on the division between so-called rooted Finns and others was visible in the interviews but I also noted that the teachers saw that identities (and Finnishness) are formed in contact with multiple cultures. However, the liminality of different cultural identities seemed to be confusing to some teachers. For example, I got the impression that the line between cultural appropriation and the mixture of different cultures in school was not clear-cut, the students' individual cultures seeming to be formed in a way that is in line with Bhabha's notions of cultural liminality and thus including a free mixture of different elements, such as certain slang words, accessories and symbols. Most of the interviewees also noted how the students seem to know naturally how to behave in a multicultural environment.



So, it could be said that cultural diversity was seen as a natural part of school life. Yet, it seemed to me that cultural diversity was seen as attributable to immigration, globalization and international adoption and that it is mainly not something that would exist otherwise. One teacher said that the Romani people may also have benefited from the growing cultural diversity, meaning, to my mind, that Finland has always had diverse cultural identities, but at the same time drawing a line between “true” Finns and ethnic minorities. Cultural diversity as a term was also used to illustrate the challenges it brings to teaching and the way it was talked about indicated that it was seen as a relatively new phenomenon. hooks (1994) also pointed out that bringing up different ethnicities in teaching doesn’t really support the idea of multicultural education. According to hooks, the reason why multicultural education is done by including different cultures superficially as topics tells about the level of effort that teachers are willing to do. In my opinion however, this type of approach is only natural, because it is so familiar to teachers.

I could say that Bhabha’s notions about cultural diversity which values cultures and sees them as equal but often bypasses the power structures and differences between them seemed relatable in the context of the interviews. However, power structures were discussed on a general level in school and three of the four teachers mentioned they had discussed how the Western way of seeing is dominant.

To clarify my point, I want to point out a similar type of situation that is better known and possibly more relatable to most people, i.e. the discussion about equality between different gender identities and sexualities. As in the discussion about the Sámi people’s rights and in the context of cultural diversity, the different sexualities and genders are talked about as if they had an equal status. In recent years there has been a lot of discussion leading to some progress in LGBTQ+ matters. Just like with the Sámi question in Finland, Finland is seen as a liberal, welfare state. However, from the perspective of gender and sexual minorities, equity is still far from perfect. LGBTQ+ people don’t have the same rights as cisgender people and people in heterosexual relationships and just like with the Sámi, decisions about the policies and laws that affect their lives are made by the dominant culture. Just like with the idea of cultural diversity, the positive talk about equality hides the differences that need to be addressed and thus the discussion that aims at equity remains superficial.

Bhabha’s idea of the containment of different cultures that is created in the process of cultural diversity was also very visible in the discussions about cultural appropriation. The

teachers were well aware of the processes of cultural appropriation. They described how cultural appropriation is connected to power relations and lack of knowledge and they seemed to think that the most important thing to do is to know the cultures that are being discussed and to avoid copying elements and removing them from their original context. In the discussions on cultural appropriation, they emphasized the importance of respecting other cultures. Yet, the conundrum concerning artistic freedom and getting inspiration from other cultures while avoiding cultural appropriation came up in all the interviews. In my view it seems that the term of cultural appropriation has raised an important discussion, that aims for equity and recognition of one’s one position, put sometimes the ways in which it is used inevitably puts cultures into boxes and hence creates othering. One can question if cultural appropriation forbids the blending between cultures, which isn’t in line with Bhabha’s definition of hybridity (Huddart 2006; Rutherford, 1990).

Based on my personal experience, in discussions of cultural appropriation in visual art, both in the interviews and elsewhere, the qualities of what becomes a target of cultural appropriation seem to be elements rooted in history, which are associated with so-called authenticity and which include symbols that are considered sacred and open only to insiders. For example, in the interviews, the Sámi costumes, shamanic drums, use of certain colors and symbols were mentioned as possible objects of cultural appropriation.

In my opinion, the interest in authenticity and the mystification of cultural symbols may also indicate that the cultures that are thought to be most in danger of becoming targets of cultural appropriation may be those that are seen as unchanged, which does not support Bhabha’s idea of liminality of cultures and different time phases. It seems that there is a possibility that cultural appropriation as a concept remains as superficial a phenomenon as cultural diversity and therefore it does not chime with Bhabha’s idea of cultures that are open to change and are in constant, active contact with each other.

Although cultural appropriation as a concept is an excellent and very needed, tool for exploring and recognizing power-structures in visual arts, it may also maintain a patronizing attitude which sees the cultures that are subjects of appropriation as oppressed, passive, and homogeneous. In other words, protesting against cultural appropriation can dismantle power structures and be empowering for the cultures whose elements are being appropriated, but, on the other hand, the idea of cultural appropriation maintains a pattern where one culture tells what is best for the culture that is the subject of cultural appropriation.

# CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I was aiming to find answers to a question that stemmed from my realization of being ignorant of Sámi culture. Researching a topic whose starting point was the lack of discussion and knowledge was loaded with different emotions. I ended up searching for answers in theories that were wide-ranging, and as the subject of my thesis was a very diverse culture, the themes discussed in this thesis didn't delve deeply into any specific theories. However, I want to add that this choice was made consciously, because trying to answer the question why the Sámi seem hardly to be discussed in Finnish educational system demands, in my opinion, at least some viewpoints from post-colonial theories and indigenous studies together with a critical frame of reference for the Finnish educational system and racism in Finnish society.

My thesis challenged the idea of Finland as a welfare state that is equitable for all and points to inadequacies in the Finnish educational system. In my thesis teachers are regarded as active influencers, whose role is crucial, since discussing or bypassing the Sámi in education has an impact on how the Sámi are seen in Finnish society over all. According to Kuokkanen (2007) the Sámi decolonization process is slow, partly because the majority population's knowledge of the Sámi is minimal and often distorted, which could be partly solved with education.

Based on the literature review (Schatz, Kallio-Tavin, Kuokkanen, Eldridge and Oikarinen-Jabai, Mulinari, Irni, Keskinen, Tuori) one of the shortcomings of the Finnish education system is that it hasn't met the need for a form of education that is increasingly culturally, linguistically and ethnically diverse. Even though cultural diversity has been taken into account in both the national curriculum and in practice, dealing with different ethnicities seems often to take place on a superficial level.

Adding to Bhabha's notions of cultural diversity, Sara Ahmed (2007) suggests that the concept of cultural diversity needs to be addressed by exploring what it actually stands for in the context of multicultural education. In her article "The language of diversity" (2007) Ahmed discusses how diversity is used for multiple purposes, also as a vital part in the discussions of the values in universities. According to Ahmed, as a term, diversity has started to resemble words like equality and justice, which have lost their power through constant repetition that has not led to action. Ahmed states that the term diversity is more approachable than its "predecessors" justice and equality, which are more marked by historical struggles. For that reason, it is not so strongly associated with the discussion on power-relations and the failure to achieve equality. Furthermore, like Bhabha, Ahmed comments on how valuing diversity leads to a situation where *"cultural diversity reifies difference as something that exists 'in' the bodies or culture of others, such that difference becomes a national property: if difference is something 'they are', then it is something we 'can have'."*

The interview data indicated that the concept of cultural appropriation is well-known among the teachers that I interviewed, and different ethnicities and cultures and power relations were studied from multiple perspectives. However, based on Homi Bhabha's theories, I suggest that concepts like cultural diversity and cultural appropriation might not be enough by themselves to create equality, to discuss race and differences or to dismantle power relations. Instead, we need to take a deeper look at our colonial complicity and discussion of race on all levels of education, since it seems that they are not sufficiently recognized in Finland. I'm not saying that the concept of cultural appropriation wouldn't be a great and much-needed tool in art education, but if it is used superficially, the focus will be limited to dos and don'ts and to separate elements, and if meanings and power structures are not discussed, this may lead to othering.

In this thesis I have discussed colonialism, decolonizing and post-colonial theories first on more general level and then through examples with Sámi culture and Finnish society. The examples from the visual media, presented in chapter Nordic colonialism and recognizing whiteness showed us how many Finns aren't familiar with the larger picture of colonialism in the world and see themselves as outsiders in the discussion about colonialism and racism (Mulinari et.al, 2009). Recent examples in the media also continued the discussion outside my thesis. In February, 2019 Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat published an article that criticized racism in Finnish universities. In the article, Anna-Sofia Nieminen discussed racism which a Finnish student, Brigita Krasniqi had experienced in her university studies in the University of Tampere. The article criticizes the subtle forms of racism in universities. Due to Krasniqi's foreign sounding name, the common assumption was that she would not speak Finnish. She was often treated as a representative of Islamic beliefs due to her muslim background. The article described how small differences in appearance or name lead to assumptions that can be experienced as racist. Emmanuel Acquah, Assistant Professor of Minority Studies at Åbo Akademi University, explored the problem of labelling by reminding us that the purpose of such assumptions is often not to insult, but people don't realize that these assumptions are offensive in themselves (Nieminen, 2019). After the article was published, a flood of negative responses emerged again, calling for universities in Finland to be based on Finnish culture and values. As I was reading the negative responses, I sensed that in these arguments too racism, racism was seen mainly as intentional, officially reported, obvious and overt acts by individuals.

Another recent example occurred as I was writing my conclusion in late March 2019. Mari Koppinen wrote in her column for Helsingin Sanomat about how a popular Finnish comedian, Sami Hedberg, had made racist jokes about the Sámi, homosexuals and Russians in his new tv program on national tv. Koppinen recalled similar jokes in the tv series Hymyhuulet by Pirkka-Pekka Petelius, which was also mentioned in one of my interviews, and suggested that, unlike the 1980s' comedians, Sami Hedberg should be able to recognize the offensiveness of his sketches.

This example is, of course, an isolated case. Nevertheless, it tells us what kind of material is acceptable on Finnish TV in the name of comedy today. The same ignorance on Finnish TV was also visible in Anna's interview, where she told how her daughter had contacted the TV program, Dancing with the Stars. Koppinen assumed that Hedberg was well aware that one shouldn't do stand-up about sexual minorities and ethnic groups, but, sadly, I am

not so sure about that. In my opinion, this example not only illustrates Hedberg's stupidity or ignorance - it also reflects the themes discussed in this thesis: the denial of whiteness, race and power relations. In my view, Hedberg's case is another example of the previously discussed idea of racism that is seen from a narrow perspective. Racism is justified here by explaining that the purpose of the joke is not to offend anyone and that everyone is being made fun of - including the dominant culture. We can ask who can make jokes at whose expense, and I do understand that sometimes the lines are not so clear, especially in stand-up culture. However, it should be obvious that it is not right to make fun of minorities especially if you belong to the dominant culture yourself.

In summary, we need a critical discussion on race and on the colonial complicity of Nordic countries in order for things to change for the better. This is important not only for the Sámi people but for people with all sorts of ethnic backgrounds in Finland. We should also take a closer look at our desire to hold on to the concept of culture and cultural diversity and explore their wider meaning.

## Towards action

My thesis discusses the aspects of possible ignorance of the Sámi culture in education in a critical light. I still want to emphasize that all the teachers that were interviewed were passionate about their field and were highly educated. The lack of recognition of racism hadn't gone unnoticed among them either. Thus, one could imagine that if most of them did not know the culture or history of the Sámi well, it is likely that this is common elsewhere, too.

In the analysis I discussed different aspects that affected why the Sámi hadn't been discussed in three of the four schools. In short, the three main reasons were the lack of knowledge about the Sámi culture, worries about dealing with it in the wrong way and lastly, the overwhelming amount of different things that must be discussed in the visual art classes. In the previous chapter I presented some viewpoints on what should be taken into account, especially in teacher training. Lastly, I will suggest some ways that would help the Sámi to become more visible in Finland.

First of all, I believe that if the subject was discussed more generally in schools, it would gain visibility, which would function as a stimulus for teachers to take action and educate themselves. This could be done via the so-called VESO training days that are compulsory for teachers in Finland. Schools are responsible for the content of VESO trainings and they can be arranged in various ways (The Trade Union of Education, 2019). In addition, Finnish national curriculum should include Sámi culture more. For example, the Norwegian national curriculum for elementary and upper secondary schools serves as a benchmark for Finland. The curriculum incorporates teaching programmes in Sámi for each school subject. All Norwegian schools are required to observe these regulations (Aikio-Puoskari, 2007).

Based on the interview data collected for this thesis, it would seem that teachers would prefer to have a visiting Sámi to tell them about their culture. Luckily, in the spring of 2019, the Dihtosis project began to organize educational visits to raise awareness among young people in the majority population of Finland about Sámi culture and to fill the knowledge gap in textbooks. Besides sharing information about the Sámi, the project also aims to prevent discrimination against Sami children and young people and to reinforce their identity outside the Sami region also. One important goal of the project is to make the Sámi National Day observed in Finnish schools.

The visits would involve making students take part in workshops led by trained Sámi youth. Another important part of the Dihtosis\* project is a set of method cards that can be used by teachers when they are dealing with Sámi culture independently. All the information and teaching material can be ordered free of charge online from the Youth Academia's website or downloaded and incorporated into a teacher's lesson plan.

The workshops are free for schools and they are currently available in the Helsinki metropolitan area, Tampere, Turku, Jyväskylä, Oulu, Rovaniemi and Sodankylä.

Besides education, the Sámi should be discussed in various media. Overall, there are plenty of options to bring visibility for any important issue nowadays through social media, podcasts, art exhibitions and flash mobs to mention a few. In the interviews, discussing

about the Sámi culture through films came up multiple times. For that reason I want to add that the movie Sámi blood (2016) would be a great gateway for introducing Sámi culture in schools. The movie itself is a beautiful coming-of age- drama that discusses identity and belonging to place in a way that is very relatable, while discussing historical aspects like assimilation and scientific racism in Sweden.

## Final thoughts and suggestions for future research

For future research I would recommend a broader perspective on what is the level of knowledge about the Sámi among Finnish teachers on all school levels, how their attitudes and beliefs concerning the Sámi affect whether the Sámi are discussed in Finnish schools or not and what impact it has on the Sámi on a social, cultural and individual level. Finally, in these times of ecological crises and growing globalization, instead of bypassing their presence, we should open our eyes to the possibility that we might learn from Sámi culture.

As someone who has been fascinated and inspired by different visual cultures other than my own, the ideas presented in this thesis have been painful for me. During my studies at Aalto University I have gone through a journey that has had a major impact on the way I see the world and make pictures. This learning curve has also created obstacles for my creativeness, hence the more I have learned, the more aware I am of my own position as a Western individual and the privileges it entails. I can relate to hook's words, as she says:

“And I saw for the first time that there can be, and usually is, some degree of pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking and knowing and learning new approaches. I respect that pain. And I include recognition of it now when I teach, that is to say, I teach about shifting paradigms and talk about the discomfort it can cause. White students learning to think more critically about questions of race and racism may go home for the holidays and suddenly see their parents in a different light. They may recognize nonprogressive thinking, racism, and so on, and it may hurt them that new ways of knowing may create estrangement where there was none. Often when students return from breaks I ask them to share with

\* Dihtosis is a joint project between the Youth Council of the Sámi Parliament and the Youth Academy, funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The project is currently planned for two years, it but will continue longer if funding is available (Dihtosis-hanke, 2019).

us how ideas that they have learned or worked on in the classroom impacted their experience outside. This gives them both the opportunity to know that difficult experiences may be common and practice at integrating theory and practice: ways of knowing with habits of being. We practice interrogating habits of being as well as ideas. Through this process we build community.” (hooks, 1994, pp.43.)

In my opinion, hook’s notions of the pain of giving up the old ways of knowing are also present in the interviews. The flood of rules, theories, practices and multiple backgrounds in school life creates challenges that inevitably include feelings of pain, confusion and even resistance. Visual elements that were considered colorful, exciting and innocent in the past are now considered as cultural appropriation, exoticism and stereotyping. However, once we learn to see further than our own perspective, we can no longer close our eyes to injustice.

When I started writing my thesis, my understanding of both Sámi and post-colonial theories were minimal. With the writing process and doing the interviews for my thesis, a whole new world has opened for me and its complexity has confused me throughout the writing process. However, this has been an excellent lesson on how all knowledge, theory, and beliefs contain multiple perspectives and truths, and thus it is impossible to reach a final point of learning.

It is my hope that I have introduced some relevant viewpoints for understanding why the Sámi are neglected in education in Finland and to open a discussion on this subject. Although the limitations of the scope of my thesis and my own personal starting point had an impact on the outcome, I hope I was able to make a small contribution to the subject being discussed. Although at this point the changes are small, three of the teachers I interviewed thanked me for widening their perspectives on the Sámi.

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